



*Life*  
APPLICATION<sup>®</sup>  
Study Bible



KJV



*presented to*

\_\_\_\_\_  
BY \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

ON THE OCCASION OF \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

◆ ISAIAH 40:8

THE GRASS WITHERETH, THE FLOWER FADETH:  
BUT THE WORD OF OUR GOD SHALL STAND FOR EVER.



*marriage*

\_\_\_\_\_

AND \_\_\_\_\_

WERE UNITED IN MARRIAGE ON

\_\_\_\_\_

AT \_\_\_\_\_

BY \_\_\_\_\_

WITNESSED BY

MAID OF HONOR \_\_\_\_\_

BEST MAN \_\_\_\_\_

ATTENDANTS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

◆ GENESIS 2:24

◆ THEREFORE SHALL A MAN LEAVE HIS FATHER  
AND HIS MOTHER, AND SHALL CLEAVE UNTO HIS WIFE:  
AND THEY SHALL BE ONE FLESH.



# *births*

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NAME DATE

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BIRTHPLACE

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NAME DATE

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BIRTHPLACE

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NAME DATE

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BIRTHPLACE

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NAME DATE

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BIRTHPLACE

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NAME DATE

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BIRTHPLACE

LO, CHILDREN ARE AN HERITAGE OF THE LORD:  
AND THE FRUIT OF THE WOMB IS HIS REWARD.





# Baptisms

\_\_\_\_\_  
WAS BAPTIZED ON

AT \_\_\_\_\_

BY \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
WAS BAPTIZED ON

AT \_\_\_\_\_

BY \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
WAS BAPTIZED ON

AT \_\_\_\_\_

BY \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
WAS BAPTIZED ON

AT \_\_\_\_\_

BY \_\_\_\_\_

◆ EPHESIANS 4:5

◆ ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM.



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NAME

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DATE

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NAME

DATE

AND GOD HATH BOTH RAISED UP THE LORD,  
AND WILL ALSO RAISE UP US BY HIS OWN POWER.

husband

THE FAMILY

NAME BIRTHPLACE DATES

BROTHERS AND SISTERS

PARENTS

FATHER

MOTHER

NAME

NAME

BIRTHPLACE DATES

BIRTHPLACE DATES

GRANDPARENTS

PATERNAL

MATERNAL

GRANDFATHER

GRANDFATHER

BIRTHPLACE DATES

BIRTHPLACE DATES

GRANDMOTHER

GRANDMOTHER

BIRTHPLACE DATES

BIRTHPLACE DATES

GREAT-GRANDPARENTS

PATERNAL

MATERNAL

GRANDFATHER'S FATHER

GRANDFATHER'S FATHER

BIRTHPLACE DATES

BIRTHPLACE DATES

GRANDFATHER'S MOTHER

GRANDFATHER'S MOTHER

BIRTHPLACE DATES

BIRTHPLACE DATES

GRANDMOTHER'S FATHER

GRANDMOTHER'S FATHER

BIRTHPLACE DATES

BIRTHPLACE DATES

GRANDMOTHER'S MOTHER

GRANDMOTHER'S MOTHER

BIRTHPLACE DATES

BIRTHPLACE DATES



wife

# T R E E

NAME BIRTHPLACE DATES

BROTHERS AND SISTERS

## PARENTS

### FATHER

### MOTHER

NAME

NAME

BIRTHPLACE DATES

BIRTHPLACE DATES

## GRANDPARENTS

### PATERNAL

### MATERNAL

GRANDFATHER

GRANDFATHER

BIRTHPLACE DATES

BIRTHPLACE DATES

GRANDMOTHER

GRANDMOTHER

BIRTHPLACE DATES

BIRTHPLACE DATES

## GREAT-GRANDPARENTS

### PATERNAL

### MATERNAL

GRANDFATHER'S FATHER

GRANDFATHER'S FATHER

BIRTHPLACE DATES

BIRTHPLACE DATES

GRANDFATHER'S MOTHER

GRANDFATHER'S MOTHER

BIRTHPLACE DATES

BIRTHPLACE DATES

GRANDMOTHER'S FATHER

GRANDMOTHER'S FATHER

BIRTHPLACE DATES

BIRTHPLACE DATES

GRANDMOTHER'S MOTHER

GRANDMOTHER'S MOTHER

BIRTHPLACE DATES

BIRTHPLACE DATES





# *special memories*

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EVENT

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PLACE

DATE

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EVENT

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PLACE

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EVENT

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DATE

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EVENT

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PLACE

DATE

PSALM 118:29



O GIVE THANKS UNTO THE LORD; FOR HE IS GOOD:  
FOR HIS MERCY ENDURETH FOR EVER.

*Life Application*  
STUDY BIBLE



A large, light gray decorative flourish that starts at the bottom left, curves upwards and to the right, then loops back down and to the left, framing the text.

*Life*

APPLICATION<sup>®</sup>  
Study Bible

K I N G  
J A M E S  
V E R S I O N

Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.  
Carol Stream, Illinois



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Tyndale House Publishers gratefully acknowledges the role of Youth for Christ/USA in preparing the Life Application Notes and Bible Helps.

The Bible text used in this edition of the *Life Application Study Bible* is the *Holy Bible*, King James Version.

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ISBN 978-0-8423-2098-6 Bonded Leather Black  
ISBN 978-0-8423-5221-5 Bonded Leather Black Indexed  
ISBN 978-0-8423-2095-5 Bonded Leather Burgundy  
ISBN 978-0-8423-2096-2 Bonded Leather Burgundy Indexed  
ISBN 978-1-4143-7547-2 LeatherLike Brown/Tan  
ISBN 978-1-4143-7548-9 LeatherLike Brown/Tan Indexed  
ISBN 978-1-4143-3640-4 LeatherLike Dark Chocolate/Dusty Blue  
ISBN 978-1-4143-6316-5 LeatherLike Dark Chocolate/Dusty Blue Indexed  
ISBN 978-1-4143-6345-5 LeatherLike Black/Pink  
ISBN 978-1-4143-6346-2 LeatherLike Black/Pink Indexed  
ISBN 978-0-8423-1636-1 Hardcover

Printed in the United States of America

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# LIST OF THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

<i>The Old Testament</i>		<i>The New Testament</i>	
2	GENESIS	1328	MATTHEW
90	EXODUS	1404	MARK
149	LEVITICUS	1459	LUKE
189	NUMBERS	1536	JOHN
250	DEUTERONOMY	1602	ACTS
298	JOSHUA	1680	ROMANS
336	JUDGES	1711	1 CORINTHIANS
382	RUTH	1742	2 CORINTHIANS
392	1 SAMUEL	1763	GALATIANS
449	2 SAMUEL	1778	EPHESIANS
496	1 KINGS	1792	PHILIPPIANS
552	2 KINGS	1802	COLOSSIANS
603	1 CHRONICLES	1815	1 THESSALONIANS
644	2 CHRONICLES	1824	2 THESSALONIANS
698	EZRA	1830	1 TIMOTHY
718	NEHEMIAH	1841	2 TIMOTHY
743	ESTHER	1849	TITUS
759	JOB	1855	PHILEMON
802	PSALMS	1859	HEBREWS
917	PROVERBS	1884	JAMES
962	ECCLESIASTES	1895	1 PETER
976	SONG OF SOLOMON	1907	2 PETER
984	ISAIAH	1913	1 JOHN
1057	JEREMIAH	1924	2 JOHN
1129	LAMENTATIONS	1927	3 JOHN
1137	EZEKIEL	1930	JUDE
1200	DANIEL	1934	REVELATION
1226	HOSEA		
1243	JOEL		
1249	AMOS		
1260	OBADIAH		
1264	JONAH		
1271	MICAH		
1280	NAHUM		
1285	HABAKKUK		
1290	ZEPHANIAH		
1297	HAGGAI		
1301	ZECHARIAH		
1316	MALACHI		





## PUBLISHER'S PREFACE TO THE AUTHORIZED KING JAMES VERSION TYNDALE PARAGRAPHED EDITION

Traditionally, the King James Version has been typeset by treating each verse as an individual paragraph. This practice, though of long tradition, did not originate with the original biblical texts. In fact, the original texts were not divided by verse numbers at all. The numbers were inserted in late medieval times to facilitate study and discussion. So for an English translation, the paragraph divisions in many cases should not be located at the verse breaks, but at locations that set apart the larger (or sometimes, smaller) meaning units that constitute a modern English paragraph. Such paragraphs group together appropriate sections of the text to help readers better grasp the meaning of a passage.

More recent English translations have followed the rules of paragraphing defined by standard writing in English, grouping appropriate content into meaningful units. It is these same general principles that have guided the paragraphing of this edition of the King James Version. It should be noted that the practice of publishing paragraphed editions of the KJV is not new. The *Cambridge Paragraph Bible*, the most notable such edition, was published in 1873. This paragraphed text has appeared in various editions during the last century and is still in print today. However, the paragraphs set in the 1873 edition are often so long that they make the KJV text more difficult to follow rather than easier.

The *Cambridge Paragraph Bible* also does not always follow our contemporary rules for paragraphing. For example, in narrative sections it often lumps multiple speakers together within a single paragraph. Contemporary style normally sets a paragraph break when the speaker in a narrative changes. The Tyndale paragraphed edition of the KJV, along with most contemporary translations, follows the more contemporary rules, resulting in paragraphs that are shorter and easier to understand.

Below, we will state the essential paragraphing principles used for this King James edition and the punctuation adjustments that go with them. But before listing these principles, it should be emphasized that this edition preserves the standard wording of the King James Version throughout.

- The paragraph breaks for this edition of the KJV were determined by means of several principles. We looked to the tradition of the *Cambridge Paragraph Bible* (1873) as a starting point. Where it reflected contemporary paragraphing principles, we assumed their breaks. But when the paragraphs became unwieldy in length or grouped numerous speakers together, we broke the paragraphs down into smaller, more contemporary units. In narrative sections, each change in speaker is set off by a new paragraph. This can result in dividing single verses into more than one paragraph, but more often results in grouping verses together. The consequent paragraphs are similar in length and character to those found in most contemporary English translations.
- In lengthy poetic passages, the *Cambridge Paragraph Bible* (1873) breaks each verse into multiple poetic lines. We chose, however, to maintain the traditional verse-by-verse paragraphing throughout these sections. So throughout the poetic sections, including Job, Psalms, and many sections of the prophets, each verse appears as an individual paragraph, with its standard initial capital letter and traditional closing punctuation. In Psalms, the text will appear as it does in all traditional editions of the King James Version.
- In the traditional King James text, each verse opens with a capital letter, without regard to the final punctuation of the previous verse. This makes sense when each verse is

being set as an individual paragraph. But when verses are run into paragraph groupings, each verse's initial capital letter is maintained only if the previous verse ends with a period. This follows the punctuation standards set by the KJV text in general: all colons, semicolons, and commas are followed by a lower case letter.

- The traditional punctuation of the King James text has been maintained, except for a few rare occasions when it was appropriate to end a paragraph after a verse that did not end with a period. In such cases, the closing colon or semicolon was replaced by a period. In extended poetic sections where the traditional verse breaks have been maintained, the initial capital letter and traditional punctuation have also been maintained.

OUR PRAYER is that this paragraphed edition of the King James Version will provide contemporary readers with a Bible text that is easy to follow and that accurately preserves the historic text of the Authorized King James Version.

# EPISTLE DEDICATORY FOR THE AUTHORIZED KING JAMES VERSION

TO THE MOST HIGH AND MIGHTY PRINCE  
JAMES  
BY THE GRACE OF GOD  
KING OF GREAT BRITAIN, FRANCE, AND IRELAND  
DEFENDER OF THE FAITH, &c.

The Translators of the Bible wish Grace, Mercy, and Peace  
through JESUS CHRIST our Lord

GREAT and manifold were the blessings, most dread Sovereign, which Almighty God, the Father of all mercies, bestowed upon us the people of *England*, when first he sent Your Majesty's Royal Person to rule and reign over us. For whereas it was the expectation of many, who wished not well unto our *Sion*, that upon the setting of that bright *Occidental Star*, Queen *Elizabeth* of most happy memory, some thick and palpable clouds of darkness would so have overshadowed this Land, that men should have been in doubt which way they were to walk; and that it should hardly be known, who was to direct the unsettled State; the appearance of Your Majesty, as of the *Sun* in his strength, instantly dispelled those supposed and surmised mists, and gave unto all that were well affected exceeding cause of comfort; especially when we beheld the Government established in Your Highness, and Your hopeful Seed, by an undoubted Title, and this also accompanied with peace and tranquility at home and abroad.

But among all our joys, there was no one that more filled our hearts, than the blessed continuance of the preaching of God's sacred Word among us; which is that inestimable treasure, which excelleth all the riches of the earth; because the fruit thereof extendeth itself, not only to the time spent in this transitory world, but directeth and disposeth men unto that eternal happiness which is above in heaven.

Then not to suffer this to fall to the ground, but rather to take it up, and to continue it in that state, wherein the famous Predecessor of Your Highness did leave it: nay, to go forward with the confidence and resolution of a Man in maintaining the truth of Christ, and propagating it far and near, is that which hath so bound and firmly knit the hearts of all Your Majesty's loyal and religious people unto You, that Your very name is precious among them: their eye doth behold You with comfort, and they bless You in their hearts, as that sanctified Person who, under God, is the immediate Author of their true happiness. And this their contentment doth not diminish or decay, but every day increaseth and taketh strength, when they observe, that the zeal of Your Majesty toward the house of God doth not slack or go backward, but is more and more kindled, manifesting itself abroad in the farthest parts of *Christendom*, by writing in defence of the Truth, (which hath given such a blow unto that man of sin, as will not be healed,) and every day at home, by religious and learned discourse, by frequenting the house of God, by hearing the Word preached, by cherishing the Teachers thereof, by caring for the Church, as a most tender and loving nursing Father.

There are infinite arguments of this right Christian and religious affection in Your Majesty; but none is more forcible to declare it to others than the vehement and perpetuated desire of accomplishing and publishing of this work, which now with all humility we present unto Your Majesty. For when Your Highness had once out of deep judgment apprehended how convenient it was, that out of the Original Sacred Tongues, together with comparing of the labours, both in our own, and other foreign Languages, of many worthy men who went before us, there should be one more exact Translation of the holy Scriptures into the *English*



*Tongue*; Your Majesty did never desist to urge and to excite those to whom it was commended, that the work might be hastened, and that the business might be expedited in so decent a manner, as a matter of such importance might justly require.

And now at last, by the mercy of God, and the continuance of our labours, it being brought unto such a conclusion, as that we have great hopes that the Church of *England* shall reap good fruit thereby; we hold it our duty to offer it to Your Majesty, not only as to our King and Sovereign, but as to the principal Mover and Author of the work: humbly craving of Your most Sacred Majesty, that since things of this quality have ever been subject to the censures of ill-meaning and discontented persons, it may receive approbation and patronage from so learned and judicious a Prince as Your Highness is, whose allowance and acceptance of our labours shall more honour and encourage us, than all the calumniations and hard interpretations of other men shall dismay us. So that if, on the one side, we shall be traduced by Popish Persons at home or abroad, who therefore will malign us, because we are poor instruments to make God's holy Truth to be yet more and more known unto the people, whom they desire still to keep in ignorance and darkness; or if, on the other side, we shall be maligned by self conceited Brethren, who run their own ways, and give liking unto nothing, but what is framed by themselves, and hammered on their anvil; we may rest secure, supported within by the truth and innocency of a good conscience, having walked the ways of simplicity and integrity, as before the Lord; and sustained without by the powerful protection of Your Majesty's grace and favour, which will ever give countenance to honest and Christian endeavours against bitter censures and uncharitable imputations.

The Lord of heaven and earth bless Your Majesty with many and happy days, that, as his heavenly hand hath enriched Your Highness with many singular and extraordinary graces, so You may be the wonder of the world in this latter age for happiness and true felicity, to the honour of that great GOD, and the good of his Church, through Jesus Christ our Lord and only Saviour.

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A special thanks to the nationwide staff of Youth for Christ/USA for their suggestions and field testing, and to the following additional contributing writers: V. Gilbert Beers, Neil Wilson, John Crosby, Joan Young, Jack Crabtree, Philip Craven, Bob Black, Bur Shilling, Arthur Deyo, Annie Lafrentz, Danny Sartin, William Hanawalt, William Bonikowsky, Brian Rathbun, Pamela Barden, Thomas Stobie, Robert Arnold, Greg Monaco, Larry Dunn, Lynn Ziegenfuss, Mitzie Barton, Mari-jean Hamilton, Larry Kreider, Gary Dausey, William Roland, Kathy Howell, Philip Steffek, James Coleman, Marty Grasley, O'Ann Steere, Julia Amstutz.

A special thanks also to the following people whose personal counsel, encouragement, and determination helped make this product a reality:

Dr. Kenneth N. Taylor (deceased)  
 Translator of *The Living Bible*  
 Chairman of the Board  
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Mark D. Taylor

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Dr. Wendell C. Hawley  
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Jim and Patti Moffett  
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# A CHRONOLOGY OF BIBLE EVENTS AND WORLD EVENTS

THE TIMELINE on the following pages of the introduction gives you a visual overview of events in Bible times as compared to other famous world events. (The timelines in the individual Bible books are different—focusing on the events occurring in the books themselves.) This timeline gives the scope of Bible history from Creation to the resurrection of Christ and the beginnings of the church, along with key events that were occurring in other parts of the world.

*Creation  
undated*



*Noah  
builds  
the ark  
undated*



*Abraham  
born  
2166*

*Abraham  
enters  
Canaan  
2091*



**2500 B. C.**  
*Egyptians  
discover  
papyrus  
and ink for  
writing and  
build the first  
libraries;  
iron objects  
manufactured  
in the ancient  
Near East*

**2400**  
*Egyptians  
import  
gold from  
other parts  
of Africa*

**2331**  
*Semitic  
chieftain,  
Sargon,  
conquers  
Sumer to  
become  
first "world  
conqueror"*

**2300**  
*Horses  
domesticated  
in Egypt;  
chickens  
domesticated  
in Babylon;  
bows & arrows  
used in wars*

**2100**  
*Glass made  
by the  
Mesopotamians;  
ziggurats (like  
the tower of  
Babel) built in  
Mesopotamia;  
earliest  
discovered  
drug, ethyl  
alcohol, used  
to alleviate pain*

# WHY THE LIFE APPLICATION STUDY BIBLE IS UNIQUE

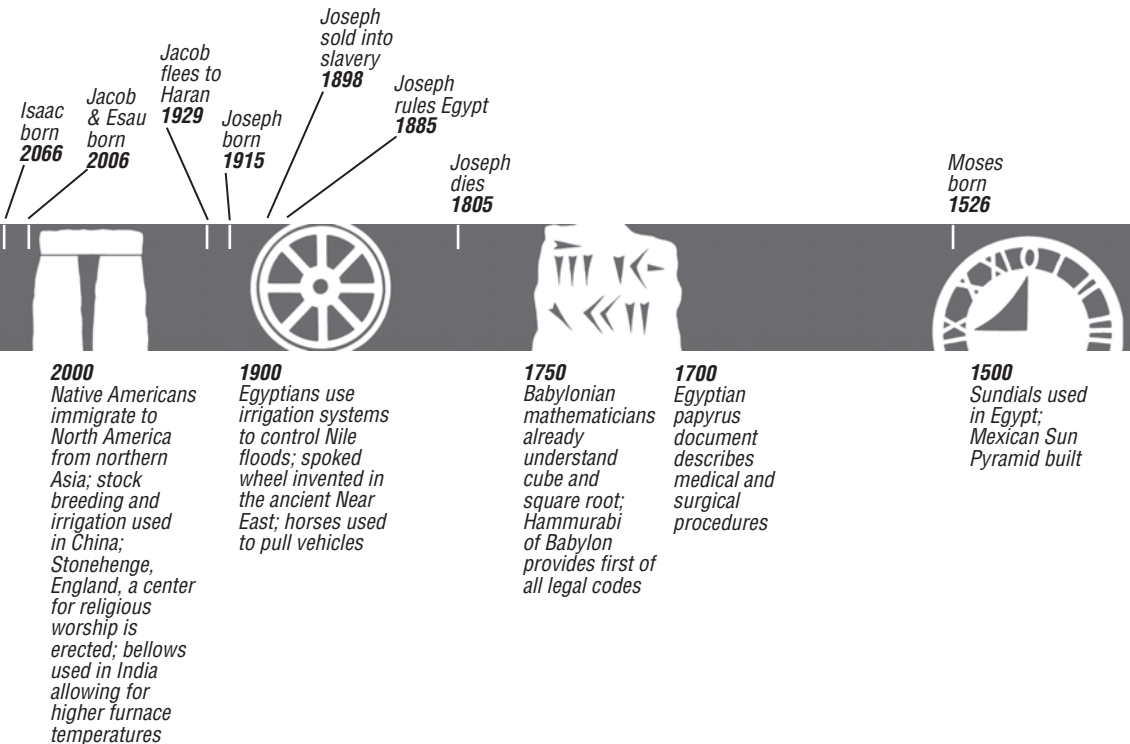
Have you ever opened your Bible and asked the following:

- What does this passage really mean?
- How does it apply to my life?
- Why does some of the Bible seem irrelevant?
- What do these ancient cultures have to do with today?
- I love God; why can't I understand what he is saying to me through his Word?
- What's going on in the lives of these Bible people?

Many Christians do not read the Bible regularly. Why? Because in the pressures of daily living, they cannot find a connection between the timeless principles of Scripture and the ever-present problems of day-by-day living.

God urges us to apply his Word (Isaiah 42:23; 1 Corinthians 10:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:4), but too often we stop at accumulating Bible knowledge. This is why the *Life Application Study Bible* was developed—to show how to put into practice what we have learned.

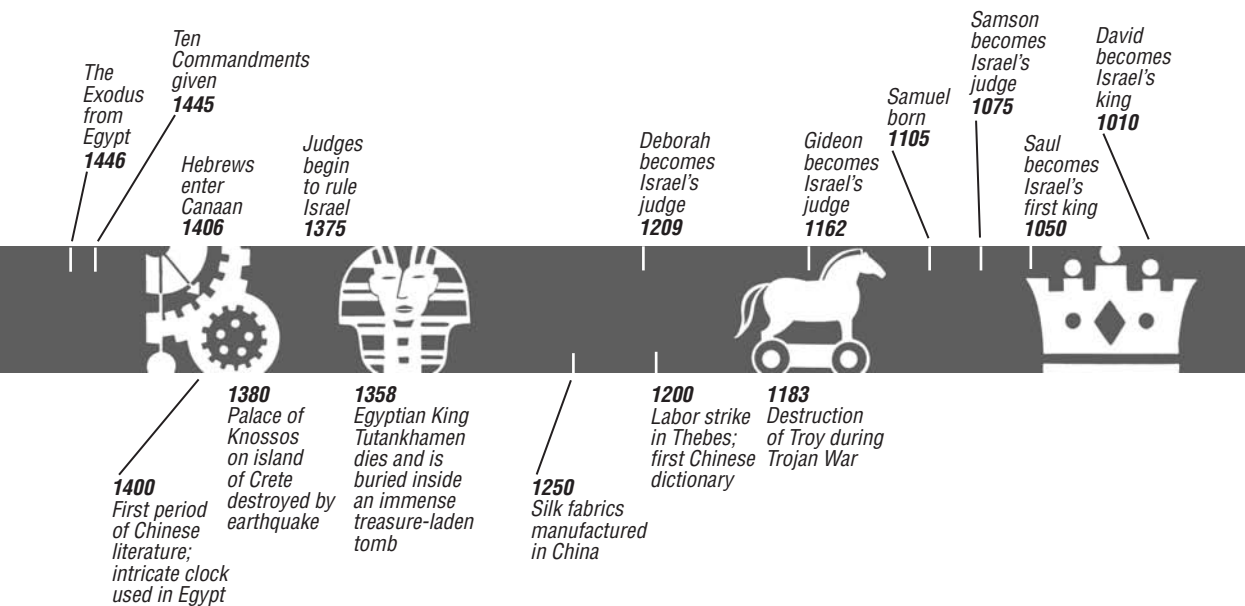
Applying God's Word is a vital part of one's relationship with God; it is the evidence that we are obeying him. The difficulty in applying the Bible is not with the Bible itself, but with the reader's inability to bridge the gap between the past and present, the conceptual and practical. When we don't or can't do this, spiritual dryness, shallowness, and indifference are the results.



The words of Scripture itself cry out to us, “Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (James 1:22). The *Life Application Study Bible* does just that. Developed by an interdenominational team of pastors, scholars, family counselors, and a national organization dedicated to promoting God’s Word and spreading the gospel, the *Life Application Study Bible* took many years to complete, and all the work was reviewed by several renowned theologians under the directorship of Dr. Kenneth Kantzer.

The *Life Application Study Bible* does what a good resource Bible should—it helps you understand the context of a passage, gives important background and historical information, explains difficult words and phrases, and helps you see the interrelationships within Scripture. But it does much more. The *Life Application Study Bible* goes deeper into God’s Word, helping you discover the timeless truth being communicated, see the relevance for your life, and make a personal application. While some study Bibles attempt application, over 75 percent of this Bible is application oriented. The notes answer the questions, “So what?” and “What does this passage mean to me, my family, my friends, my job, my neighborhood, my church, my country?”

Imagine reading a familiar passage of Scripture and gaining fresh insight, as if it were the first time you had ever read it. How much richer your life would be if you left each Bible reading with a new perspective and a small change for the better. A small change every day adds up to a changed life—and that is the very purpose of Scripture.



# WHAT IS APPLICATION?

The best way to define application is to first determine what it is *not*. Application is *not* just accumulating knowledge. This helps us discover and understand facts and concepts, but it stops there. History is filled with philosophers who knew what the Bible said but failed to apply it to their lives, keeping them from believing and changing. Many think that understanding is the end goal of Bible study, but it is really only the beginning.

Application is *not* just illustration. Illustration only tells us how someone else handled a similar situation. While we may empathize with that person, we still have little direction for our personal situation.

Application is *not* just making a passage “relevant.” Making the Bible relevant only helps us to see that the same lessons that were true in Bible times are true today; it does not show us how to apply them to the problems and pressures of our individual lives.

What, then, is application? Application begins by knowing and understanding God’s Word and its timeless truths. *But you cannot stop there.* If you do, God’s Word may not change your life, and it may become dull, difficult, tedious, and tiring. A good application focuses the truth of God’s Word, shows the reader what to do about what is being read, and motivates the reader to respond to what God is teaching. All three are essential to application.

Application is putting into practice what we already know (see Mark 4:24 and Hebrews 5:14) and answering the question, “So what?” by confronting us with the right questions

Solomon becomes Israel's king **970**

Temple in Jerusalem completed **959**

Kingdom of Israel divides **930**

Elijah prophesies in Israel **875**

Ahab becomes Israel's king **874**

Elisha prophesies in Israel **848**

Joash becomes Judah's king **835**

Jonah becomes a prophet **793**



**1000**  
City of Peking built; Greek mythology fully developed; California Indians build wood-reed houses; Chinese mathematics utilizes root multiplication, geometry, proportions, and theory of motion; glazing of bricks and tiles begins in Near East

**950**  
Gold vessels and jewelry popular in northern Europe

**900**  
Celts invade Britain; Assyrians invent inflatable skins for soldiers to cross rivers

**850**  
Evidence of highly developed metal and stone sculptures in Africa

**814**  
Founding of Carthage, a Phoenician trading post

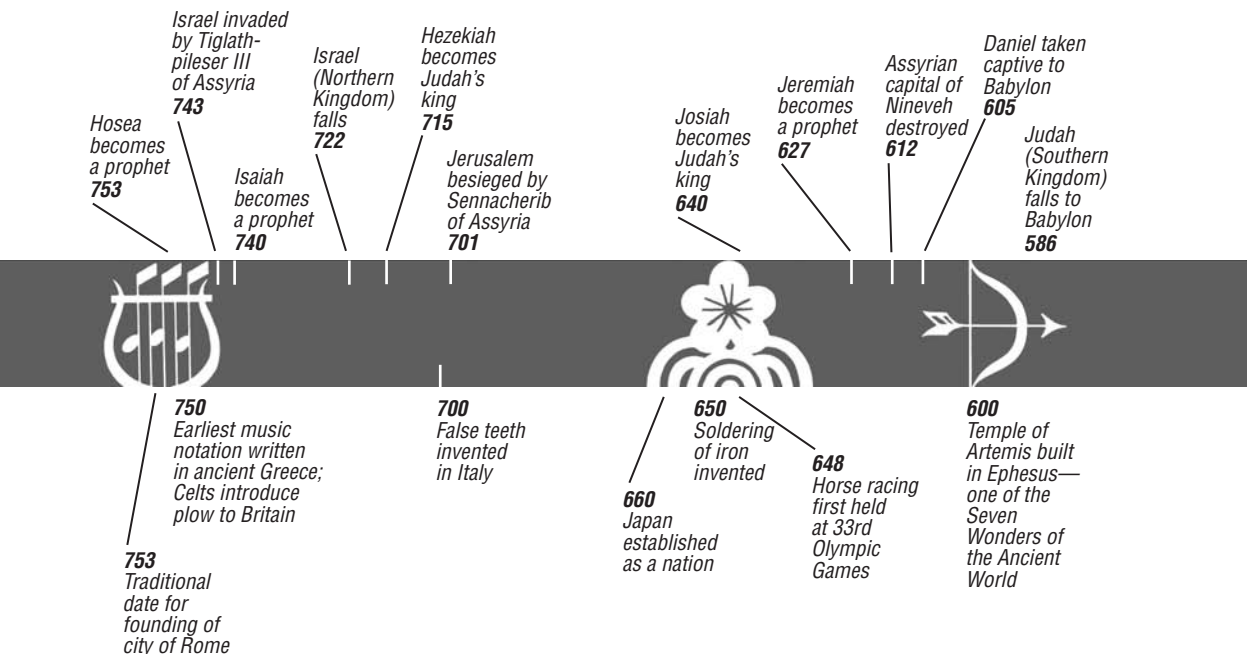
**800**  
Development of caste system in India; Babylonian and Chinese astronomers understand planetary movements; spoked wheels used in Europe; Homer writes Iliad and Odyssey; ice skating a popular sport in northern Europe

**776**  
First known date of Olympic games

and motivating us to take action (see 1 John 2:5, 6 and James 2:17). Application is deeply personal—unique for each individual. It is making a relevant truth a personal truth, and it involves developing a strategy and action plan to live your life in harmony with the Bible. It is the biblical “how to” of life.

You may ask, “How can your application notes be relevant to my life?” Each application note has three parts: (1) an *explanation* that ties the note directly to the Scripture passage and sets up the truth that is being taught, (2) the *bridge* that explains the timeless truth and makes it relevant for today, (3) the *application* that shows you how to take the timeless truth and apply it to your personal situation. No note, by itself, can apply Scripture directly to your life. It can only teach, direct, lead, guide, inspire, recommend, and urge. It can give you the resources and direction you need to apply the Bible; but only *you* can take these resources and put them into practice.

A good note, therefore, should not only give you knowledge and understanding, but point you to application. Before you buy any kind of resource Bible, you should evaluate the notes and ask the following questions: (1) Does the note contain enough information to help me understand the point of the Scripture passage? (2) Does the note assume I know too much? (3) Does the note avoid denominational bias? (4) Do the notes touch most of life’s experiences? (5) Does the note help me *apply* God’s Word?





# FEATURES OF THE LIFE APPLICATION STUDY BIBLE

## NOTES

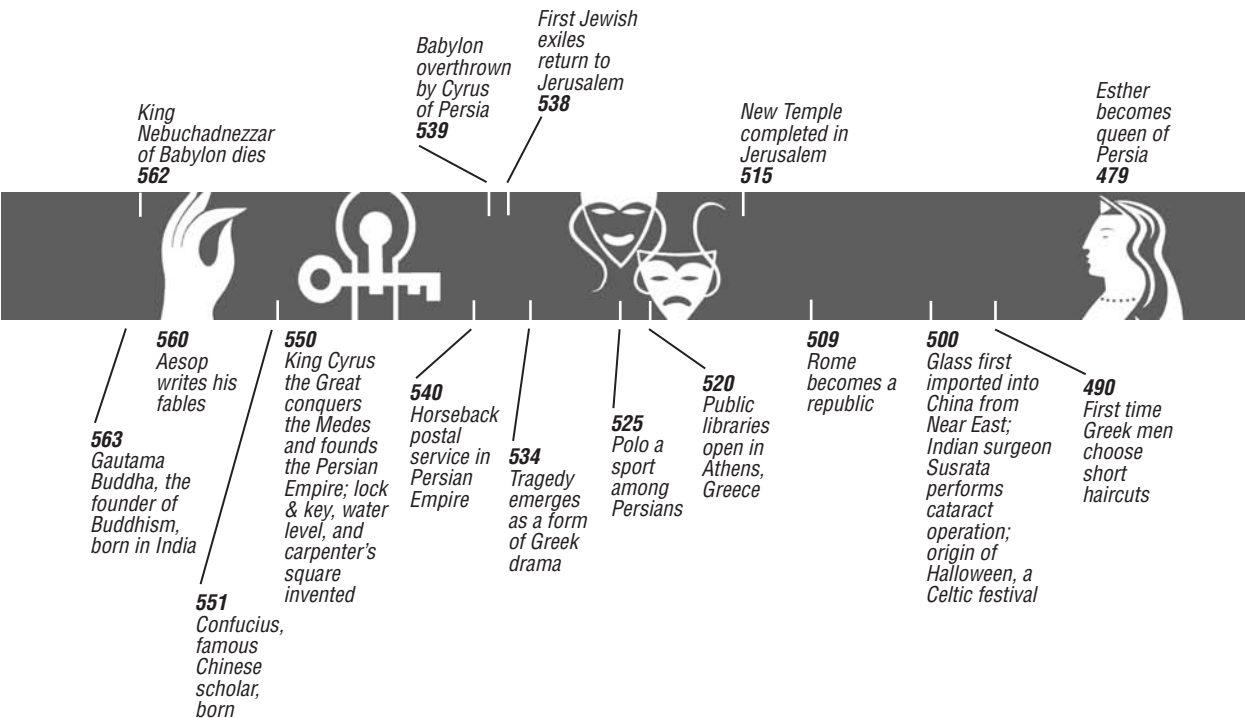
In addition to providing the reader with many application notes, the *Life Application Study Bible* offers several explanatory notes, which are notes that help the reader understand culture, history, context, difficult-to-understand passages, background, places, theological concepts, and the relationship of various passages in Scripture to other passages. Maps, charts, and diagrams are also found on the same page as the passages to which they relate. For an example of an application note, see Mark 15:47. For an example of an explanatory note, see Mark 11:1, 2. The abbreviation *ff* appears in some notes to indicate that the comments apply not only to the verse referenced but to the following passage as well.

## BOOK INTRODUCTIONS

The Book Introductions are divided into several easy-to-find parts:

**Timeline.** This puts the Bible book into its historical setting. It lists the key events of each book and the date when they occurred. The alternative dates in parenthesis are based on a later dating of the Exodus.

**Vital Statistics.** This is a list of straight facts about the book—those pieces of information you need to know at a glance.



*Overview.* This is a summary of the book with general lessons and application that can be learned from the book as a whole.

*Blueprint.* This is the outline of the book. It is printed in easy-to-understand language and is designed for easy memorization. To the right of each main heading is a key lesson that is taught in that particular section.

*Megathemes.* This section gives the main themes of the Bible book, explains their significance, and then tells why they are still important for us today.

*Map.* This shows the key places found in that book and retells the story of the book from a geographical point of view.

## OUTLINE

The *Life Application Study Bible* has a new, custom-made outline that was designed specifically from an application point of view. Several unique features should be noted:

1. To avoid confusion and to aid memory work, each book outline has only three levels for headings. Main outline heads are marked with a capital letter. Subheads are marked by a number. Minor explanatory heads have no letter or number.
2. Each main outline head marked by a letter also has a brief paragraph below it summarizing the Bible text and offering a general application.
3. Parallel passages are listed where they apply in the Gospels.

## A HARMONY OF THE BOOKS OF KINGS AND CHRONICLES

A harmony of the books of 1 & 2 Kings and 1 & 2 Chronicles was developed to help you understand the interplay between these books. The chart is set up like a timeline, providing you with the names of the kings listed chronologically, a brief overview of each king's reign, and where you can read about each king. It also includes the names of all the prophets—as well as when and to whom they prophesied—so you can put their

Ezra  
returns to  
Jerusalem  
**458**

Nehemiah  
builds  
Jerusalem  
wall  
**445**

Malachi  
becomes  
a prophet  
**430?**

Aramaic  
begins to  
replace  
Hebrew  
as Jewish  
language  
**390**



**469**  
Socrates,  
philosopher  
of the  
ancient  
world,  
born

**457**  
Golden Age  
in Athens,  
Greece  
begins  
**460**  
Birth of  
Democritus,  
who introduced  
an atomic  
theory by  
arguing that  
all bodies are  
made of  
indivisible and  
unchangeable  
atoms

**448**  
The  
Parthenon  
built on  
top of  
Athens'  
Acropolis

**438**  
Greek sculptor  
Phidias makes  
a 60-foot-  
high statue  
of Zeus—  
one of the  
Seven Wonders  
of the Ancient  
World

**430**  
Romans  
agree to  
concept of  
a dictator  
in times  
of military  
emergency

**399**  
Socrates  
condemned  
to death by  
Athenian  
jury

**384**  
Aristotle  
born

**370**  
Plato writes  
his most  
famous  
book, *The  
Republic*

prophecies into context as well. The harmony feature is located between the books of 1 and 2 Kings.

### A HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS

A harmony of the Gospels was developed specifically for this Bible. It is the first harmony that has ever been incorporated into the Bible text. Through a unique and simple numbering system (found both in the harmony feature and parenthesized in the subheads throughout the Gospels), you can read any Gospel account and see just where you are in relation to other events in the life of Christ. The harmony feature is located after the Gospel of John and explained in detail there.

### PERSONALITY PROFILES

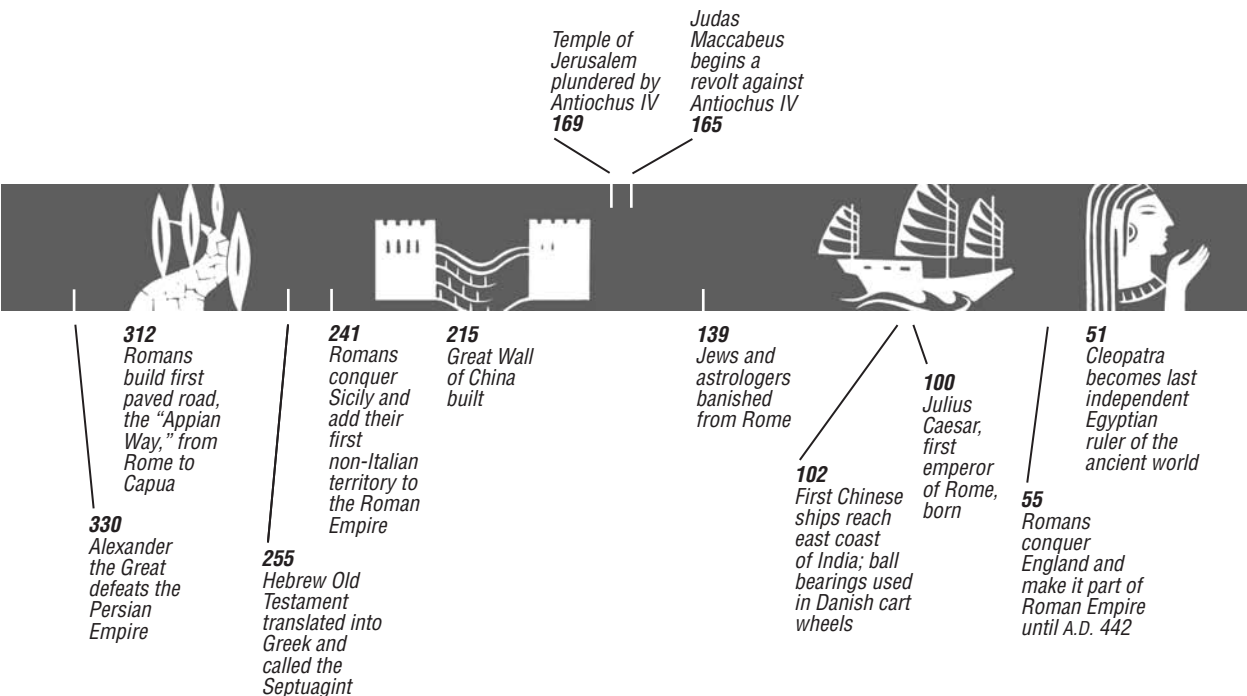
Another unique feature of this Bible is the profiles of many Bible people, including their strengths and weaknesses, greatest accomplishments and mistakes, and key lessons from their lives. The profiles of these people are found in the Bible books where their stories occur.

### MAPS

The *Life Application Study Bible* has more maps than any other Bible. A thorough and comprehensive Bible atlas is built right into each Bible book. There are two kinds of maps (1) A book introduction map, telling the story of that Bible book. (2) Thumbnail maps in the notes, plotting most geographic movements in the Bible. In addition to these numerous black-and-white maps, there is an entirely new and comprehensive set of color maps and diagrams at the back of this Bible.

### CHARTS AND DIAGRAMS

Hundreds of charts and diagrams are included to help the reader better visualize difficult concepts or relationships. Most charts not only present the needed information but show the significance of the information as well.



## CROSS-REFERENCES

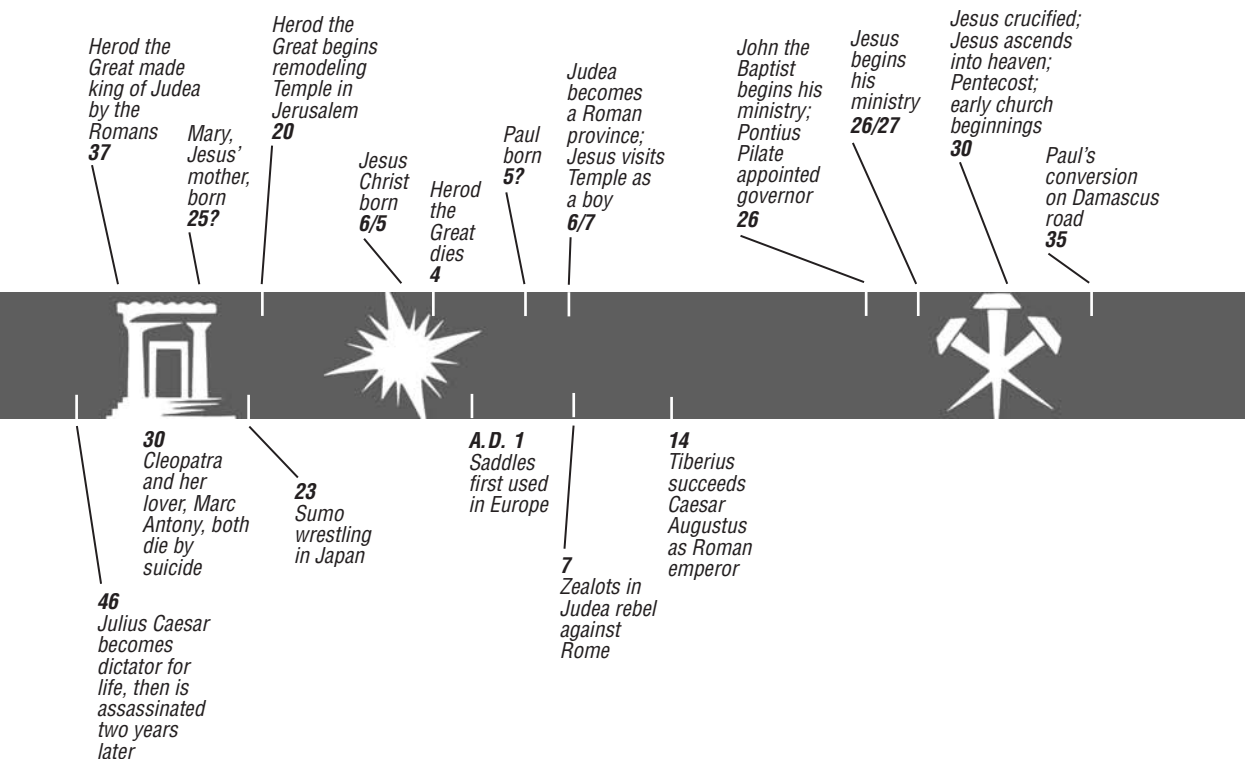
A carefully organized cross-reference system in the margins of the Bible text helps the reader find related passages quickly. A cross-reference marked by two slashes (//) indicates that the cross-reference is a parallel passage, largely identical to the identified text in content and wording. A cross-reference marked by a dagger (†) indicates that the identified text either quotes from the cross-reference or the cross-referenced text quotes the identified text.

## TEXTUAL NOTES AND SECTIONAL HEADINGS

On each page of the King James text, glossary notes offer immediate definitions for difficult or archaic English terminology, saving time for Bible study that might have been spent consulting an English dictionary. The text also contains sectional headings in order to help you more easily understand the subject and content of each section. The headings throughout the Gospels also include a parenthesized number, relating each passage to the “Harmony of the Gospels” feature.

## A CHRISTIAN WORKER’S RESOURCE

The Christian Worker’s Resource is a special supplement written with you in mind. It includes five articles that you will find useful in your ministry: (1) “How to Become a Christian” includes the basic steps of becoming a believer, along with Bible verses you can use to guide someone to faith. (2) “How to Follow up with a New Believer” gives you fourteen discussion points to walk through with a new believer over the course of



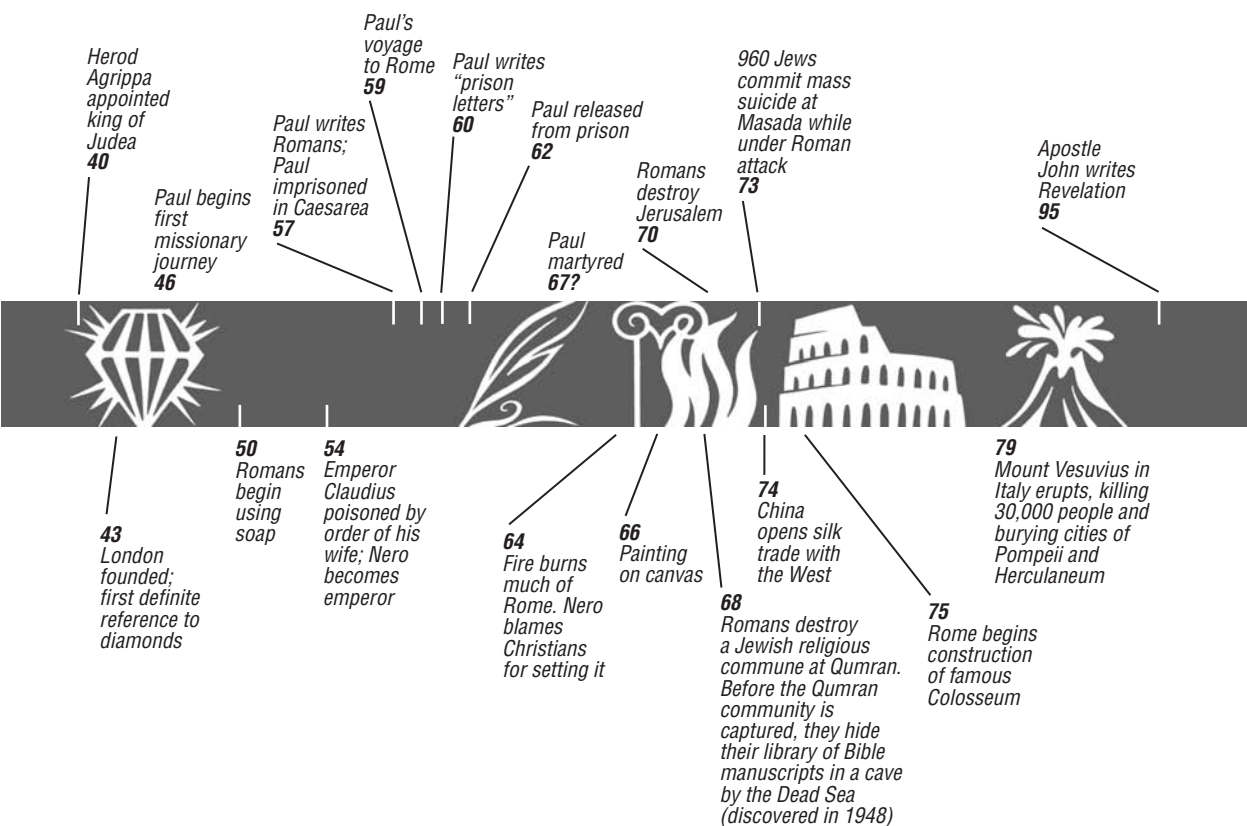
several weeks. These will help him or her to understand the basics of the Christian faith. (3) "Mining the Treasures of the *Life Application Study Bible*" gives you a taste of the depth of the study notes by offering often-asked questions in twenty-five categories (that you probably have been asked from time to time) and sends you to life application notes that help to answer those questions. (4) "So You've Been Asked to Speak" walks you through the process of preparing a talk or Bible study using the many features of the *Life Application Study Bible*. (5) Finally, "Taking the Step to Application" teaches you how to make application a natural part of your personal study, as well as a part of Bible studies you lead or talks you give.

### MASTER INDEX

This Bible contains a complete index to all the notes, charts, maps, and personality profiles. With its emphasis on application, it is helpful for group Bible study, sermon preparation, teaching, or personal study.

### DICTIONARY/CONCORDANCE

A concise concordance identifies terms and proper names of special interest and points to the important occurrences in context. Each word is followed by a brief definition or description.





*old*

TESTAMENT



# GENESIS

Creation

Noah  
(undated)

Abram  
born  
2166 B.C.  
(2000 B.C.)

Abram  
enters  
Canaan  
2091  
(1925)

Isaac  
born  
2066  
(1900)

## VITAL STATISTICS

### PURPOSE:

To record God's creation of the world and his desire to have a people set apart to worship him

### AUTHOR:

Moses

### ORIGINAL AUDIENCE:

The people of Israel

### DATE WRITTEN:

1450–1410 B.C.

### WHERE WRITTEN:

In the wilderness during Israel's wanderings, somewhere in the Sinai peninsula

### SETTING:

The region presently known as the Middle East

### KEY VERSES:

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (1:27). "And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (12:2, 3).

### KEY PEOPLE:

Adam, Eve, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, Joseph



BEGIN . . . start . . . commence . . . open . . .

There's something refreshing and optimistic about these words, whether they refer to the dawn of a new day, the birth of a child, the prelude of a symphony, or the first miles of a family vacation. Free of problems and full of promise, beginnings stir hope and imaginative visions of the future. *Genesis* means "beginnings" or "origin," and it unfolds the record of the beginning of the world, of human history,

of family, of civilization, of salvation. It is the story of God's purpose and plan for his creation. As the book of beginnings, *Genesis* sets the stage for the entire Bible. It reveals the person and nature of God (Creator, Sustainer, Judge, Redeemer); the value and dignity of human beings (made in God's image, saved by grace, used by God in the world); the tragedy and consequences of sin (the fall, separation from God, judgment); and the promise and assurance of salvation (covenant, forgiveness, promised Messiah).

God. That's where *Genesis* begins. All at once we see him creating the world in a majestic display of power and purpose, culminating with a man and woman made like himself (1:26, 27). But before long, sin entered the world, and Satan was unmasked. Bathed in innocence, creation was shattered by the fall (the willful disobedience of Adam and Eve). Fellowship with God was broken, and evil began weaving its destructive web. In rapid succession, we read how Adam and Eve were expelled from the beautiful garden, their first son turned murderer, and evil bred evil until God finally destroyed everyone on earth except a small family led by Noah, the only godly person left.

As we come to Abraham on the plains of Canaan, we discover the beginning of God's covenant people and the broad strokes of his salvation plan: Salvation comes by faith, Abraham's descendants will be God's people, and the Savior of the world will come through this chosen nation. The stories of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph that follow are more than interesting biographies. They emphasize the promises of God and the proof that he is faithful. The people we meet in *Genesis* are simple, ordinary people, yet through them, God did great things. These are vivid pictures of how God can and does use all kinds of people to accomplish his good purposes—even people like you.

Read *Genesis* and be encouraged. There is hope! No matter how dark the world situation seems, God has a plan. No matter how insignificant or useless you feel, God loves you and wants to use you in his plan. No matter how sinful and separated from God you are, his salvation is available. Read *Genesis* . . . and hope!

## THE BLUEPRINT

### A. THE STORY OF CREATION (1:1—2:3)

God created the sky, seas, and land. He created the plants, animals, fish, and birds. But he created human beings in his own image. At times, others may treat us disrespectfully. But we can be certain of our dignity and worth because we have been created in the image of God.

<i>Jacob &amp; Esau born 2006 (1840)</i>	<i>Jacob flees to Haran 1929 (1764)</i>	<i>Joseph born 1915 (1750)</i>	<i>Joseph sold into slavery 1898 (1733)</i>	<i>Joseph rules Egypt 1885 (1720)</i>	<i>Joseph dies 1805 (1640)</i>
------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------	--------------------------------	---------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------	--------------------------------

**B. THE STORY OF ADAM (2:4—5:32)**

1. Adam and Eve
2. Cain and Abel
3. Adam's descendants

When Adam and Eve were created by God, they were without sin. But they became sinful when they disobeyed God and ate some fruit from the tree. Through Adam and Eve we learn about the destructive power of sin and its bitter consequences.

**C. THE STORY OF NOAH (6:1—11:32)**

1. The great flood
2. Repopulating the earth
3. The tower of Babel

Noah was spared from the destruction of the flood because he obeyed God and built the boat. Just as God protected Noah and his family, he still protects those who are faithful to him today.

**D. THE STORY OF ABRAHAM (12:1—25:18)**

1. God promises a nation to Abraham
2. Abraham and Lot
3. God promises a son to Abraham
4. Sodom and Gomorrah
5. Birth and near sacrifice of Isaac
6. Isaac marries Rebekah
7. Abraham dies

Abraham was asked to leave his country, wander in Canaan, wait years for a son, and then sacrifice him as a burnt offering. Through these periods of sharp testing, Abraham remained faithful to God. His example teaches us what it means to live a life of faith.

**E. THE STORY OF ISAAC (25:19—28:9)**

1. Jacob and Esau, Isaac's twin sons
2. Isaac and King Abimelech
3. Isaac blesses Jacob instead of Esau

Isaac did not demand his own way. He did not resist when he was about to be sacrificed, and he gladly accepted a wife chosen for him by others. Like Isaac, we must learn to put God's will ahead of our own.

**F. THE STORY OF JACOB (28:10—36:43)**

1. Jacob starts a family
2. Jacob returns home

Jacob did not give up easily. He faithfully served Laban for over 14 years. Later, he wrestled with God. Although Jacob made many mistakes, his hard work teaches us about living a life of service for our Lord.

**G. THE STORY OF JOSEPH (37:1—50:26)**

1. Joseph is sold into slavery
2. Judah and Tamar
3. Joseph is thrown into jail
4. Joseph is placed in charge of Egypt
5. Joseph and his brothers meet in Egypt
6. Jacob's family moves to Egypt
7. Jacob and Joseph die in Egypt

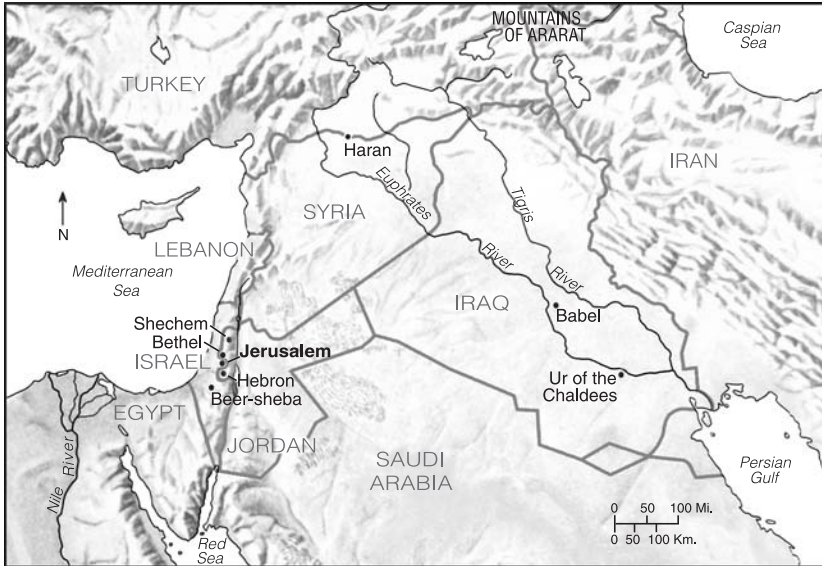
Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers and unjustly thrown into prison by his master. Through the life of Joseph, we learn that suffering, no matter how unfair, can develop strong character in us.

**MEGATHEMES**

THEME	EXPLANATION	IMPORTANCE
<i>Beginnings</i>	Genesis explains the beginning of many important realities: the universe, the earth, people, sin, and God's plan of salvation.	Genesis teaches us that the earth is well made and good. People are special to God and unique. God creates and sustains all life.
<i>Disobedience</i>	People are always facing great choices. Disobedience occurs when people choose not to follow God's plan of living.	Genesis explains why people are evil: They choose to do wrong. Even great Bible heroes failed God and disobeyed.
<i>Sin</i>	Sin ruins people's lives. It happens when we disobey God.	Living God's way makes life productive and fulfilling.
<i>Promises</i>	God makes promises to help and protect people. This kind of promise is called a "covenant."	God kept his promises then, and he keeps them now. He promises to love us, accept us, forgive us.
<i>Obedience</i>	The opposite of sin is obedience. Obeying God restores our relationship to him.	The only way to enjoy the benefits of God's promises is to obey him.
<i>Prosperity</i>	Prosperity is deeper than mere material wealth. True prosperity and fulfillment come as a result of obeying God.	When people obey God, they find peace with him, with others, and with themselves.
<i>Israel</i>	God started the nation of Israel in order to have a dedicated people who would (1) keep his ways alive in the world, (2) proclaim to the world what he is really like, and (3) prepare the world for the birth of Christ.	God is looking for people today to follow him. We are to proclaim God's truth and love to all nations, not just our own. We must be faithful to carry out the mission God has given us.



# KEY PLACES IN GENESIS



Modern names and boundaries are shown in gray.

land of Canaan. Along the way, they settled in the village of Haran for a while (11:31).

**5 Shechem** God urged Abram to leave Haran and go to a place where he would become the father of a great nation (12:1, 2). So Abram, Lot, and Sarai traveled to the land of Canaan and settled near a city called Shechem (Sichem, 12:6).

**6 Hebron** Abraham moved on to Hebron, where he put down his deepest roots (13:18). Abra-

ham, Isaac, and Jacob all lived and were buried here.

**7 Beer-sheba** A well was dug here as a sign of an oath between Abraham and the army of King Abimelech (21:31). Years later, as Isaac was moving from place to place, God appeared to him here and passed on to him the covenant he had made with his father, Abraham (26:23–25).

**8 Bethel** After deceiving his brother, Jacob left Beer-sheba and fled to Haran. Along the way, God revealed himself to Jacob in a dream and passed on the covenant he had made with Abraham and Isaac (28:10–22). Jacob lived in Haran, worked for Laban, and married Leah and Rachel (29:15–30). After a tense meeting with his brother Esau, Jacob returned to Bethel (35:1).

**9 Egypt** Jacob had 12 sons, including Joseph, Jacob's favorite. Joseph's 10 older brothers grew jealous, until one day, out in the fields, they sold him to Ishmaelite traders who were going to Egypt. Eventually, Joseph rose from Egyptian slave to Pharaoh's "right-hand man," saving Egypt and the surrounding country from famine. His entire family moved from Canaan to Egypt and settled there (46:3–7).

God created the universe and the earth. Then he made man and woman, giving them a home in a beautiful garden. Unfortunately, Adam and Eve disobeyed God and were expelled from the garden (3:24).

**1 Mountains of Ararat** Adam and Eve's sin brought sin into the human race. Years later sin had run rampant and God decided to destroy the earth with a great flood. But Noah, his family, and two of each animal were safe in the ark. When the floods receded, the ark rested on the mountains of Ararat (8:4).

**2 Babel** People never learn. Again sin abounded and the pride of the people led them to build a huge tower as a monument to their own greatness—obviously they had no thought of God. As punishment, God scattered the people by giving them different languages (11:8, 9).

**3 Ur of the Chaldees (Chaldeans)** Abram, a descendant of Shem and father of the Hebrew nation, was born in this great city (11:27, 28).

**4 Haran** Terah, Lot, Abram, and Sarai left Ur and following the fertile crescent of the Euphrates River, headed toward the

## A. THE STORY OF CREATION (1:1—2:3)

We sometimes wonder how our world came to be. But here we find the answer. God created the earth and everything in it, and made man like himself. Although we may not understand the complexity of just how he did it, it is clear that God did create all life. This shows not only God's authority over humanity, but his deep love for all people.

**1** In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. <sup>2</sup>And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

1:1  
Pss 89:11; 102:25  
Isa 42:5; 48:13  
John 1:1-3

1:2  
Ps 104:30  
Isa 45:18

**1:1** The simple statement that God created the heavens and the earth is one of the most challenging concepts confronting the modern mind. The vast galaxy we live in is spinning at the incredible speed of 490,000 miles an hour. But even at this breakneck speed, our galaxy still needs 200 million years to

make one rotation. And there are over one billion other galaxies in the universe.

It has been said that the number of stars in creation is equal to all the grains of all the sands on all the beaches of the world. Yet this complex sea of spinning stars functions with remarkable

1:3  
Pss 33:9; 104:2  
2 Cor 4:6

1:6  
Job 26:10  
Ps 136:5-6  
Isa 40:22  
Jer 10:12

1:7  
Job 38:8-11  
Ps 148:4

1:9  
Job 26:7  
Ps 95:5  
Prov 8:29  
Jer 5:22  
2 Pet 3:5

1:11  
Ps 104:14  
Matt 6:30

1:14  
Pss 74:16; 104:19

1:15  
Gen 1:5

<sup>3</sup>And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. <sup>4</sup>And God saw the light, that *it was* good: and God divided the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup>And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

<sup>6</sup>And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. <sup>7</sup>And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which *were* under the firmament from the waters which *were* above the firmament: and it was so. <sup>8</sup>And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

<sup>9</sup>And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry *land* appear: and it was so. <sup>10</sup>And God called the dry *land* Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that *it was* good. <sup>11</sup>And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, *and* the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed *is* in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. <sup>12</sup>And the earth brought forth grass, *and* herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed *was* in itself, after his kind: and God saw that *it was* good. <sup>13</sup>And the evening and the morning were the third day.

<sup>14</sup>And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: <sup>15</sup>and let them be

1:6 *firmament: space.*

## BEGINNINGS: ORIGIN OF THE UNIVERSE

The Bible does not discuss the subject of evolution. Rather, its worldview assures us that God created the world. The biblical view of creation is not in conflict with science; rather, it is in conflict with any worldview that starts without a creator.

Equally committed and sincere Christians have struggled with the subject of beginnings and come to differing conclusions. This, of course, is to be expected since the evidence is very old and, due to the ravages of the ages, quite fragmented. Students of the Bible and of science should avoid polarizations and black/white thinking. Students of the Bible must be careful not to make the Bible say what it doesn't say, and students of science must not make science say what it doesn't say.

The most important aspect of the continuing discussion is not the *process* of creation, but the *origin* of creation. The world is not a product of blind chance and probability. God created it.

The Bible not only tells us that the world was created by God; more important, it tells us who this God is. It reveals God's personality, his character, and his plan for his creation. It also reveals God's deepest desire: to relate to and fellowship with the people he created. God took the ultimate step toward fellowship with us through his historic visit to this planet in the person of his Son, Jesus Christ. We can know this God who created the universe in a very personal way.

The heavens and the earth are here. We are here. God created all that we see and experience. The book of Genesis begins, "God created the heaven and the earth."

Here we begin the most exciting and fulfilling journey imaginable.

order and efficiency. To say that the universe "just happened" requires more faith than to believe that God is behind these amazing statistics. God truly did create a wonderful universe.

God did not *need* to create the universe; he *chose* to create it. Why? God is love, and love is best expressed toward something or someone else—so God created the world and people as an expression of his love. Don't reduce God's creation to merely scientific terms and forget that God created the universe because he loves us.

**1:1f** The creation story teaches us much about God and ourselves. First, we learn about God: (1) He is creative; (2) as the Creator he is distinct from his creation; (3) he is eternal and in control of the world. Second, we learn about ourselves: (1) Since God chose to create us, we are valuable in his eyes; (2) we are given a place above the animals.

**1:1f** Did God create the world? If so, just how did he do it? This is still a subject of great debate. Some say that with a sudden explosion, the universe appeared. Others say God got it all started, and the rest evolved over billions of years. Almost every ancient religion has its own story to explain how the world came to be. And almost every scientist has an opinion on the origin of the universe. But only the Bible shows the supreme God creating the earth out of his great love and giving all people a special place in it. We will never know all the answers to how God created the world, but the Bible tells us that God did create it. That fact alone gives worth and dignity to all people.

**1:2** Who created God? To ask that question, we have to assume there was another creator before God. At some time, however, we are forced to stop asking that question and realize that there had to be something that has always existed. God is that infinite Being who has always been and who was created by no one. This is difficult to understand because finite minds cannot comprehend the infinite. For example, we can try to think of the highest number, but we can't do it. Likewise, we must not limit the infinite God by our finite understanding.

**1:2** The image of the Spirit of God moving over the waters is similar to a bird caring for and protecting its young (see Deuteronomy 32:11, 12; Isaiah 31:5). God's Spirit was actively involved in the creation of the world (see Job 33:4; Psalm 104:30).

**1:3—2:7** How long did it take God to create the world? There are two basic views about the days of creation: (1) Each day was a literal 24-hour period; (2) each day represents an indefinite period of time (even millions of years).

The Bible does not say which theory is true. The real question, however, is not how long God took, but how he did it. God created the world in an orderly fashion (he did not make plants before light), and he created men and women as unique beings capable of communication with him. No other part of creation can claim that remarkable privilege. The important point is not how long it took God to create the world, but that he created it just the way he wanted it.

for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. <sup>16</sup>And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: *he made* the stars also. <sup>17</sup>And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, <sup>18</sup>and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that *it was* good. <sup>19</sup>And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

1:16  
Pss 8:3;  
19:1-6;  
136:8-9  
1 Cor 15:41

1:18  
Jer 33:20, 25

<sup>20</sup>And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl *that* may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. <sup>21</sup>And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that *it was* good. <sup>22</sup>And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. <sup>23</sup>And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

1:20  
Gen 2:19  
Ps 146:6

1:21  
Pss 104:25-28

<sup>24</sup>And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. <sup>25</sup>And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that *it was* good.

1:24  
Gen 2:19

<sup>26</sup>And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. <sup>27</sup>So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. <sup>28</sup>And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

1:26  
Gen 5:1; 9:6  
Ps 8:6-8  
Acts 17:28-29

1:27  
<sup>†</sup>Matt 19:4  
<sup>†</sup>Mark 10:6

<sup>29</sup>And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. <sup>30</sup>And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein *there is* life, *I have given* every green herb for meat: and it was so. <sup>31</sup>And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, *it was* very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

1:29  
Gen 9:3  
Pss 104:13; 136:25

1:30  
Pss 104:14; 145:15

1:31  
Ps 104:24

1:29 *meat: food.*

First Day . . . . .	Light (so there was light and darkness)
Second Day . . . . .	Sky and water (vapors separated)
Third Day . . . . .	Sea and earth (waters gathered); vegetation
Fourth Day . . . . .	Sun, moon, and stars (to preside over day and night and to mark seasons, days, and years)
Fifth Day . . . . .	Fish and birds (to fill the waters and the sky)
Sixth Day. . . . .	Animals (to fill the earth) Man and woman (to care for the earth and commune with God)
Seventh Day . . . . .	God rested and declared all he had made to be very good



**1:25** God saw that his work was good, and he was pleased. People sometimes feel guilty for having a good time or for feeling good about an accomplishment. This need not be the case. Just as God was pleased with his work, we can be pleased with ours. However, we cannot be pleased with our work if God would not be pleased with it. What are you doing that pleases both you and God?

**1:26** Why does God use the plural form, “Let *us* make man in *our* image”? One view says this is a reference to the Trinity—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Another view is that the plural wording is used to denote majesty. Kings traditionally use the plural form in speaking of themselves.

**1:26** In what ways are we made in God’s image? God obviously did not create us exactly like himself, especially in a physical sense. Instead, we are reflections of God’s glory. God is sinless, eternal, and unlimited. Although we are given the potential to be sinless and eternal, we are also given the choice to fall short. We will never be totally like God because he is our supreme creator. Our best hope is to reflect his character in our love, patience, forgiveness, kindness, and faithfulness.

Knowing that we are made in God’s image and thus share many

of his characteristics provides a solid basis for self-worth. Human worth is not defined by possessions, achievements, physical attractiveness, or public acclaim. Instead it comes from being made in God’s image. Because we are like God we can feel positive about ourselves. Knowing that you are a person of infinite worth gives you the freedom to love God, know him personally, and make a valuable contribution to those around you.

**1:27** God made both man and woman in his image. Neither man nor woman is made more in the image of God than the other. From the beginning the Bible places both man and woman at the pinnacle of creation. Neither sex is exalted, and neither is depreciated.

**1:28** To have *dominion* over something is to have absolute authority and control over it. God has ultimate dominion over the earth, and he exercises his authority with loving care. When God delegated some of his authority to the human race, he expected us to take responsibility for the environment and the other creatures that inhabit our planet. We must not be careless as we fulfill his charge. Like the creator, we should care for the earth responsibly and lovingly.

**1:31** God was pleased with all he created, for he saw that it was



2:1  
Deut 4:19; 17:3  
Ps 104:2  
Isa 45:12  
2:2  
Exod 20:11; 31:17  
<sup>1</sup>Heb 4:4

**2** Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. <sup>2</sup>And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. <sup>3</sup>And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

2:3  
Isa 58:13

**B. THE STORY OF ADAM (2:4—5:32)**

Learning about our ancestors often helps us understand ourselves. Adam and Eve, our first ancestors, were the highlight of God’s creation—the very reason God made the world. But they didn’t always live the way God intended. Through their mistakes, we can learn important lessons on how to live rightly. Adam and Eve teach us much about the nature of sin and its consequences.

2:4  
Gen 1:3-31; 5:1;  
6:9; 10:1  
Job 38:4-11

**1. Adam and Eve**

<sup>4</sup>These *are* the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, <sup>5</sup>and every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and *there was* not a man to till the ground. <sup>6</sup>But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. <sup>7</sup>And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

2:5  
Gen 1:11

2:7  
Gen 3:19  
Job 33:4  
Ps 103:14  
Ezek 37:5  
Zech 12:1  
John 20:22  
<sup>11</sup>Cor 15:45

*The Garden of Eden*

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

2:8  
Gen 3:23; 13:10  
Isa 51:3  
Ezek 28:13  
Joel 2:3

2:9  
Gen 3:22  
Prov 3:18; 11:30  
Ezek 47:12  
Rev 2:7; 22:2, 14

<sup>10</sup>And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and

2:10  
Rev 22:1, 17

**WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT MARRIAGE**

- Genesis 2:18–24 . . . . . Marriage is God’s idea
- Genesis 24:58–60 . . . . . Commitment is essential to a successful marriage
- Song of Songs 4:9–10 . . . Romance is important
- Jeremiah 7:34 . . . . . Marriage holds times of great joy
- Malachi 2:14, 15 . . . . . Marriage creates the best environment for raising children
- Matthew 5:32 . . . . . Unfaithfulness breaks the bond of trust, the foundation of all relationships
- Matthew 19:6 . . . . . Marriage is permanent
- Romans 7:2, 3 . . . . . Ideally, only death should dissolve marriage
- Ephesians 5:21–33 . . . . . Marriage is based on the principled practice of love, not on feelings
- Ephesians 5:23–32 . . . . . Marriage is a living symbol of Christ and the church
- Hebrews 13:4 . . . . . Marriage is good and honorable

very good. You are part of God’s creation, and he is pleased with how he made you. If at times you feel worthless or of little value, remember that God made you for a good reason. You are valuable to him.

**2:2, 3** We live in an action-oriented world! Yet God demonstrated that rest is appropriate and right. If God himself rested from his work, we should not be surprised that we also need rest. Jesus demonstrated this principle when he and his disciples left in a boat to get away from the crowds (see Mark 6:31, 32). Our times of rest refresh us for times of service.

**2:7** “Of the dust of the ground” implies that there is nothing fancy about the chemical elements from which we are made. The body is a lifeless shell until God brings it alive with his “breath of life.” When God removes his life-giving breath, our bodies once again return to dust. Our life and worth, therefore, come from God’s Spirit. Many boast of their achievements, only to fail soon after. Others have no achievements to boast about. But in reality, our worth comes not from our achievements but from the God of the universe, who chooses to give us the mysterious and miraculous gift of life. Value life, as he does.

**2:8–14** The Garden of Eden was a showcase of the magnificent beauty God intended for his creation. Eden was no accident. It was a place designed to be fully enjoyed.

**2:9** The name of the tree of knowledge of good and evil implies that evil had already occurred, if not in the garden, then at the time of Satan’s fall.

**2:9, 16, 17** Were the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil real trees? Two views are often expressed: (1) *The trees were real but symbolic.* Eternal life with God was symbolized by eating from the tree of life. (2) *The trees were real, possessing special properties.* By eating the fruit from the tree of life, Adam and Eve could have had eternal life, enjoying a permanent relationship as God’s children.

In either case, Adam and Eve’s sin separated them from the tree of life and thus kept them from obtaining eternal life. Interestingly, the tree of life again appears in a description in Revelation 22 of people enjoying eternal life with God.

became into four heads. <sup>11</sup>The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; <sup>12</sup>and the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. <sup>13</sup>And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. <sup>14</sup>And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates.

<sup>15</sup>And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. <sup>16</sup>And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: <sup>17</sup>but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

*Eve is created*

<sup>18</sup>And the LORD God said, *It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.* <sup>19</sup>And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. <sup>20</sup>And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

<sup>21</sup>And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; <sup>22</sup>and the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. <sup>23</sup>And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. <sup>24</sup>Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. <sup>25</sup>And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

*Adam and Eve sin*

**3** Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

**2:18** help meet: suitable helper. **2:24** cleave: be joined. **3:1** subtil: cunning.

**2:11**  
Gen 25:18

**2:14**  
Gen 15:18  
Deut 1:7  
Dan 10:4

**2:15**  
Gen 2:8

**2:16**  
Gen 3:1-3

**2:17**  
Gen 3:1, 16-17  
Deut 30:15, 19-20  
Rom 6:23  
Jas 1:15

**2:18**  
Gen 3:12  
Prov 18:22

**2:19**  
Gen 1:20-25

**2:22**  
1 Cor 11:8-9  
1 Tim 2:13

**2:23**  
Gen 29:14  
Eph 5:28-30

**2:24**  
1 Matt 19:5  
1 Cor 6:16  
Eph 5:31

**2:25**  
Gen 3:7, 10-11

**3:1**  
2 Cor 11:3  
Rev 12:9; 20:2

**2:15-17** God gave Adam responsibility for the garden and told him not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Rather than physically preventing him from eating, God gave Adam a choice and, thus, the possibility of choosing wrongly. God still gives us choices today, and we, too, often choose wrongly. These wrong choices may cause us pain and irritation, but they can help us learn and grow and make better choices in the future. Living with the consequences of our choices is one of the best ways to become more responsible.

**2:16, 17** Why would God place a tree in the garden and then forbid Adam to eat from it? God wanted Adam to obey, but he gave him the freedom to choose. Without choice, Adam would have been, like a prisoner, forced to obey. The two trees presented an exercise in choice, with rewards for choosing to obey and sad consequences for choosing to disobey. When faced with the choice, choose to obey God.

**2:18-24** God's creative work was not complete until he made woman. He could have made her from the dust of the ground, as he made man. He chose, however, to make her from the man's flesh and bone. In so doing, he illustrated for us that in marriage man and woman symbolically become one flesh. This is a mystical union of the couple's hearts and lives. Throughout the Bible, God treats this special union seriously. If you are married or planning to be married, are you willing to keep the commitment which makes the two of you one? The goal in marriage should be more than friendship—it should be oneness.

**2:21-23** God styles and equips men and women for various tasks, but all lead to the same goal—honoring God. Man gives life to woman; woman gives life to the world. Each role carries exclusive privileges; there is no room for thinking that one sex is superior to the other.

**2:24** God gave marriage as a gift to Adam and Eve. They were created perfect for each other. Marriage was not just for conve-

nience, nor was it brought about by any culture. It was instituted by God and has three basic aspects: (1) The man leaves his parents and, in a public act, promises himself to his wife; (2) the man and woman are joined together by taking responsibility for each other's welfare and by loving the mate above all others; (3) the two become one flesh in the intimacy and commitment of sexual union, which is reserved for marriage. Strong marriages today include all three of these aspects.

**2:25** Have you ever noticed how a little child can run naked through a room full of strangers without embarrassment? He is not aware of his nakedness, just as Adam and Eve were not embarrassed in their innocence. But after Adam and Eve sinned, embarrassment, shame, and awkwardness followed, creating barriers between themselves and God. We often experience these same barriers in marriage. Ideally a husband and wife have no barriers, feeling no shame exposing themselves to each other or to God. Like Adam and Eve (3:7), we put on fig leaves (barriers) because we have areas we don't want our spouse, or God, to know about. Then we hide, just as Adam and Eve hid from God. In marriage, lack of spiritual, emotional, and intellectual intimacy usually precedes a breakdown of physical intimacy. In the same way, when we fail to expose our secret thoughts to God, we shut down our lines of communication with him.

**3:1** Disguised as a crafty serpent, Satan came to tempt Eve. At one time, Satan had been a glorious angel. But in pride, he rebelled against God and was cast out of heaven. As a created being, Satan has definite limitations. Although he is trying to tempt everyone away from God, he will not be the final victor. In 3:14, 15, God promises that Satan will be crushed.

**3:1-6** Why does Satan tempt us? Temptation is Satan's invitation to give in to his kind of life and give up on God's kind of life. Satan tempted Eve and succeeded in getting her to sin. He's been busy getting people to sin ever since. He even tempted Jesus (Matthew 4:1-11), but Jesus did not sin!



3:2  
Gen 2:16  
3:3  
Gen 2:17  
Exod 19:12

<sup>2</sup>And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: <sup>3</sup>but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.



ADAM

We can hardly imagine what it must have been like to be the first and only person on earth. It's one thing for us to be lonely; it was another for Adam, who had never known another human being. He missed much that makes us who we are—he had no childhood, no parents, no family or friends. He had to learn to be human on his own. Fortunately, God didn't let him struggle too long before presenting him with an ideal companion and mate, Eve. Theirs was a complete, innocent, and open oneness, without a hint of shame.

One of Adam's first conversations with his delightful new companion must have been about the rules of the garden. Before God made Eve he had already given Adam complete freedom in the garden, with the responsibility to tend and care for it. But one tree was off-limits, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam would have told Eve all about this. She knew when Satan approached her that the tree's fruit was not to be eaten. However she decided to eat the forbidden fruit. Then she offered some to Adam. At that moment, the fate of creation was on the line. Sadly, Adam didn't pause to consider the consequences. He went ahead and ate.

In that moment of small rebellion something large, beautiful, and free was shattered . . . God's perfect creation. Man was separated from God by his desire to act on his own. The effect on a plate glass window is the same whether a pebble or a boulder is hurled at it—the thousands of fragments can never be regathered.

In the case of man's sin, however, God already had a plan in motion to overcome the effects of the rebellion. The entire Bible is the story of how that plan unfolds, ultimately leading to God's own visit to earth through his Son, Jesus. His sinless life and death made it possible for God to offer forgiveness to all who want it. Our small and large acts of rebellion prove that we are descendants of Adam. Only by asking forgiveness of Jesus Christ can we become children of God.

**Strengths and accomplishments:**

- The first zoologist—namer of animals
- The first landscape architect, placed in the garden to care for it
- Father of the human race
- The first person made in the image of God, and the first human to share an intimate personal relationship with God

**Weaknesses and mistakes:**

- Avoided responsibility and blamed others; chose to hide rather than to confront; made excuses rather than admitting the truth
- Greatest mistake: teamed up with Eve to bring sin into the world

**Lessons from his life:**

- As Adam's descendants, we all reflect, to some degree, the image of God
- God wants people who, though free to do wrong, choose instead to love him
- We should not blame others for our faults
- We cannot hide from God

**Vital statistics:**

- Where: Garden of Eden
- Occupation: Caretaker, gardener, farmer
- Relatives: Wife: Eve. Sons: Cain, Abel, Seth. Numerous other children. The only man who never had an earthly mother or father.

**Key verses:**

"And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat" (Genesis 3:12).  
"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22).

Adam's story is told in Genesis 1:26—5:5. He is also mentioned in 1 Chronicles 1:1; Job 31:33; Luke 3:38; Romans 5:14; 1 Corinthians 15:22, 45; 1 Timothy 2:13, 14.

How could Eve have resisted temptation? By following the same guidelines we can follow. First, we must realize that *being tempted* is not a sin. We have not sinned until we *give in* to the temptation. Then, to resist temptation, we must (1) pray for strength to resist, (2) run, sometimes literally, and (3) say no when confronted with what we know is wrong. James 1:12 tells of the blessings and rewards for those who don't give in when tempted.

**3:1–6** The serpent, Satan, tempted Eve by getting her to doubt God's goodness. He suggested that God was strict, stingy, and selfish for not wanting Eve to share his knowledge of good and

evil. Satan made Eve forget all that God had given her and, instead, focus on what God had forbidden. We fall into trouble, too, when we dwell on what God forbids rather than on the countless blessings and promises God has given us. The next time you are feeling sorry for yourself over what you don't have, consider all you *do* have and thank God.

<sup>4</sup>And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: <sup>5</sup>for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. <sup>6</sup>And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. <sup>7</sup>And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

**3:4**  
John 8:44  
2 Cor 11:3  
**3:5**  
Gen 2:17; 3:22  
Isa 14:14  
Ezek 28:2

<sup>8</sup>And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. <sup>9</sup>And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where *art* thou?

**3:6**  
2 Cor 11:3  
1 Tim 2:14  
Jas 1:14-15  
1 Jn 2:16

<sup>10</sup>And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I *was* naked; and I hid myself.

**3:8**  
Lev 26:12  
Deut 23:14  
Job 31:33

<sup>11</sup>And he said, Who told thee that thou *wast* naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

**3:9**  
Gen 4:9; 18:9  
**3:10**  
Deut 5:5

- Doubt . . . . . Makes you question God's Word and his goodness
- Discouragement . . . . . Makes you look at your problems rather than at God
- Diversion . . . . . Makes the wrong things seem attractive so that you will want them more than the right things
- Defeat . . . . . Makes you feel like a failure so that you don't even try
- Delay . . . . . Makes you put off doing something so that it never gets done

**SATAN'S  
PLAN  
AGAINST US**

**3:5** Adam and Eve got what they wanted: an intimate knowledge of both good and evil. But they got it in a distorted and painful way—by doing evil. We sometimes have the illusion that freedom is doing anything we want. God says true freedom comes from obedience and knowing what *not* to do. The restrictions he gives us are for our good, showing us how to avoid evil. We have the freedom to walk in front of a speeding car, but we don't need to be hit to realize it would be foolish to do so. Don't listen to Satan's temptations. Don't think you have to experience evil to learn more about life.

**3:5** It wasn't wrong of Eve to want to "be as gods," or, as some versions translate the phrase, "to be like God." To become more like God is humanity's highest goal. It is what we are supposed to do. But Satan misled Eve on the right way to accomplish this goal. He told her that she could become more like God by defying God's authority, by taking God's place and deciding for herself what was best for her life. In effect, he told her to become her own god.

But to become like God is not the same as trying to become God himself. Rather, it is to reflect his characteristics, and recognize his authority over your life. Like Eve, we often have a worthy goal but try to achieve it in the wrong way. We act like a political candidate who pays off an election judge to be voted into office. When he does this, serving the people is no longer his highest goal.

Self-exaltation leads to rebellion against God. As soon as we begin to leave God out of our plans, we are placing ourselves above him. This is exactly what Satan wants us to do.

**3:6** Satan tried to make Eve think that sin is good, pleasant, and desirable. A knowledge of both good and evil seemed harmless to her. People usually choose wrong things because they have become convinced that those things are good, at least for themselves. Our sins do not always appear ugly to us, and the pleasant sins are the hardest to avoid. So prepare yourself for the attractive temptations that may come your way. We cannot always prevent temptation, but there is always a way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13).

**3:6, 7** Notice what Eve did: She looked, she took, she ate, and she gave. The battle is often engaged at the first look. Temptation may begin by simply seeing something we want. Are you struggling with temptation because you have not learned that looking is

the first step toward sin? We would win over temptation more often if we followed Paul's advice to run from those things that produce evil thoughts (2 Timothy 2:22).

**3:6, 7** One of the realities of sin is that its effect spreads. After Eve sinned, she involved Adam in her wrongdoing. When we do something wrong, often we try to relieve our guilt by involving someone else. Like poison spilled in a river, sin swiftly spreads. Recognize and confess your sin to God before you are tempted to pollute those around you.

**3:7, 8** After sinning, Adam and Eve felt guilt and embarrassment over their nakedness. Their guilty feelings made them run from God and try to hide. A guilty conscience is a warning signal God placed inside you that goes off when you've done wrong. The worst thing you could do is eliminate the guilty feelings without eliminating the cause. That is like using a pain killer but not addressing the disease. Be glad those guilty feelings are there. They make you aware of your sin so you can ask God's forgiveness and then you can correct your wrongdoing.

**3:8** The thought of two humans covered with fig leaves trying to hide from the all-seeing, all-knowing God is humorous. How could they be so silly as to think they could actually hide? Yet we do the same when we try to hide things from God. Share all you do and think with him and don't try to hide. It can't be done.

**3:8, 9** These verses show God's desire for our fellowship. They also show why we are afraid to have fellowship with him. Adam and Eve hid from God when they heard him approaching. God wanted to be with them, but because of their sin, they were afraid to show themselves. Sin had broken their fellowship with God, just as it has broken ours. But through Jesus Christ, God's Son, the way has been opened for us to renew our fellowship with him. God longs to be with us. He actively offers us his unconditional love. Our natural response is fear, for we know we can't live up to his standards. But recognizing that he loves us, regardless of our faults, can help remove that dread.

**3:11-13** Adam and Eve failed to heed God's warning recorded in 2:16, 17. They did not understand his command, so they chose to act in another way that looked better to them. All of God's commands are obviously for our own good, but we may not always understand them. A person who trusts God will obey because God asks him to, whether or not he understands the command.

**3:12**  
Prov 28:13

**3:13**  
2 Cor 11:3  
1 Tim 2:14

**3:14**  
Deut 28:15  
Isa 65:25

**3:15**  
John 8:44  
Rom 16:20  
Heb 2:14

<sup>12</sup>And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

<sup>13</sup>And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this *that* thou hast done?

And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

<sup>14</sup>And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou *art* cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: <sup>15</sup>and I will put enmity between thee and

**3:13** *beguiled*: deceived. **3:15** *enmity*: hatred.



EVE

We know very little about Eve, the first woman in the world, yet she is the mother of us all. She was the final piece in the intricate and amazing puzzle of God's creation. Adam now had another human being with whom to fellowship—someone with an equal share in God's image. Here was someone alike enough for companionship, yet different enough for relationship. Together they were greater than either could have been alone.

Eve was approached by Satan in the Garden of Eden, where she and Adam lived. He questioned her contentment. How could she be happy when she was not allowed to eat from one of the fruit trees? Satan helped Eve shift her focus from all that God had done and given to the one thing he had withheld. And Eve was willing to accept Satan's viewpoint without checking with God.

Sound familiar? How often is our attention drawn from the much which is ours to the little that isn't? We get that "I've got to have it" feeling. Eve was typical of us all, and we consistently show we are her descendants by repeating her mistakes. Our desires, like Eve's, can be quite easily manipulated. They are not the best basis for actions. We need to keep God in our decision-making process always. His Word, the Bible, is our guidebook in decision making.

**Strengths and accomplishments:**

- First wife and mother
- First female. As such she shared a special relationship with God, had co-responsibility with Adam over creation, and displayed certain characteristics of God

**Weaknesses and mistakes:**

- Allowed her contentment to be undermined by Satan
- Acted impulsively without talking either to God or to her mate
- Not only sinned, but shared her sin with Adam
- When confronted, blamed others

**Lessons from her life:**

- The female shares in the image of God
- The necessary ingredients for a strong marriage are commitment to each other, companionship with each other, complete oneness, absence of shame (Genesis 2:24, 25)
- The basic human tendency to sin goes back to the beginning of the human race

**Vital statistics:**

- Where: Garden of Eden
- Occupation: Wife, helper, companion, co-manager of Eden
- Relatives: Husband: Adam. Sons: Cain, Abel, Seth. Numerous other children.

**Key verse:**

"And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Genesis 2:18).

Eve's story is told in Genesis 2:18—4:26. Her death is not mentioned in Scripture.

**3:11–13** When God asked Adam about his sin, Adam blamed Eve. Then Eve blamed the serpent. How easy it is to excuse our sins by blaming someone else or circumstances. But God knows the truth, and he holds each of us responsible for what we do (see 3:14–19). Admit sin and apologize to God. Don't try to get away with sin by blaming someone else.

**3:14ff** Adam and Eve chose their course of action (disobedience), and then God chose his. As a holy God, he could respond only in a way consistent with his perfect moral nature. He could not allow sin to go unchecked; he had to punish it. If the consequences of Adam and Eve's sin seem extreme, remember that their sin set in motion the world's constant tendency toward disobeying God. That is why we sin today: Every human being ever born, with the exception of Jesus, has inherited the sinful nature of Adam and Eve (Romans 5:12–21). Adam and Eve's punishment reflects how seriously God views sin of any kind.

**3:14–19** Adam and Eve learned by painful experience that because God is holy and hates sin, he must punish sinners. The rest of the book of Genesis recounts painful stories of lives ruined as a result of sin. Disobedience is sin, and it breaks our fellowship with God. Fortunately, when we disobey, God is willing to forgive us and to restore our relationship with him.

**3:15** Satan is our enemy. He will do anything he can to get us to follow his evil, deadly path. The phrase "thou shalt bruise his heel" refers to Satan's repeated attempts to defeat Christ during his life on earth. "It shall bruise thy head" foreshadows Satan's defeat when Christ rose from the dead. A bruise on the heel is not deadly, but a strike on the head is. Already God was revealing his plan to defeat Satan and offer salvation to the world through his Son, Jesus Christ.

the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

<sup>16</sup>Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

<sup>17</sup>And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; <sup>18</sup>thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; <sup>19</sup>in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return.

<sup>20</sup>And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. <sup>21</sup>Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

<sup>22</sup>And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: <sup>23</sup>therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. <sup>24</sup>So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

**3:16**  
1 Cor 11:3  
Eph 5:22  
1 Tim 2:15  
**3:17**  
Job 5:7  
Eccl 1:3  
Rom 8:20-22  
**3:18**  
Job 31:40  
Heb 6:8  
**3:19**  
Gen 2:7  
Pss 90:3; 104:29  
Eccl 12:7  
1 Cor 15:47  
**3:20**  
2 Cor 11:3  
1 Tim 2:13  
**3:21**  
2 Cor 5:2-3  
**3:22**  
Gen 1:26  
**3:24**  
Ezek 10:1  
Rev 2:7; 22:2, 14

## 2. Cain and Abel

### *Cain kills Abel*

**4** And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD. <sup>2</sup>And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. <sup>3</sup>And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. <sup>4</sup>And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering; <sup>5</sup>but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

<sup>6</sup>And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? <sup>7</sup>If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee *shall be* his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

**4:2**  
Luke 11:50-51  
**4:3**  
Lev 2:1-2  
Num 18:12  
**4:4**  
Exod 13:12  
Heb 11:4  
**4:6**  
Jon 4:4  
**4:7**  
Rom 6:12, 16  
Jas 1:15

**3:24** *Cherubims*: mighty angels. *keep*: guard. **4:1** *knew*: had sexual relations with. **4:5** *wroth*: angry.

**3:17–19** Adam and Eve's disobedience affected all creation, including the environment. Years ago people thought nothing of polluting streams with chemical wastes and garbage. This seemed so insignificant, so small. Now we know that just two or three parts per million of certain chemicals can damage human health. Sin in our lives is similar to pollution in streams. Even small amounts are deadly.

**3:22–24** Life in the Garden of Eden was like living in heaven. Everything was perfect, and if Adam and Eve had obeyed God, they could have lived there forever. But after disobeying, Adam and Eve no longer deserved paradise, and God told them to leave. If they had continued to live in the garden and eat from the tree of life, they would have lived forever. But eternal life in a state of sin would mean forever trying to hide from God. Like Adam and Eve, all of us have sinned and are separated from fellowship with God. We do not have to stay separated, however. God is preparing a new earth as an eternal paradise for his people (see Revelation 21—22).

**3:24** This is how Adam and Eve broke their relationship with God: (1) They became convinced their way was better than God's; (2) they became self-conscious and hid; (3) they tried to excuse and defend themselves. To build a relationship with God we must reverse those steps: (1) We must drop our excuses and self-defenses; (2) we must stop trying to hide from God; (3) we must become convinced that God's way is better than our way.

**4:1** The word "knew" means "had sexual intercourse with" and is the perfect description of what sexual union means—oneness

and total knowledge of the other person. Sexual intercourse is the most intimate of acts, sealing a social, physical, and spiritual relationship. That is why God has reserved it for marriage alone.

**4:2** No longer was everything provided for Adam and Eve as it was in the Garden of Eden, where their daily tasks were refreshing and delightful. Now they had to struggle against the elements in order to provide food, clothing, and shelter for themselves and their family. Cain became a farmer, while Abel was a shepherd. In the Middle East today, these ancient occupations are still practiced much as they were in Cain and Abel's time.

**4:3–5** The Bible does not say why God rejected Cain's offering. Perhaps Cain's attitude was improper, or perhaps his offering was not up to God's standards. God evaluates both our motives and the quality of what we offer him. When we give to God and others, we should have a joyful heart because of what we are able to give. We should not worry about how much we are giving up, for all things are God's in the first place. Instead, we should joyfully give to God our best in time, money, possessions, and talents.

**4:6, 7** How do you react when someone suggests you have done something wrong? Do you move to correct the mistake or deny that you need to correct it? After Cain's offering was rejected, God gave him the chance to right his wrong and try again. God even encouraged him to do this! But Cain refused, and the rest of his life is a startling example of what happens to those who refuse to admit their mistakes. The next time someone suggests you are wrong, take an honest look at yourself and choose God's way instead of Cain's.

4:8  
Matt 23:35  
1 Jn 3:12

4:9  
Gen 3:9

4:10  
Num 35:33  
Deut 21:1  
Heb 12:24

4:11  
Deut 27:15-26

4:12  
Deut 28:15-24

4:14  
Gen 9:6  
Job 15:22

<sup>8</sup>And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

<sup>9</sup>And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother?

And he said, I know not: *Am* I my brother's keeper?

<sup>10</sup>And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. <sup>11</sup>And now *art* thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. <sup>12</sup>When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

<sup>13</sup>And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear. <sup>14</sup>Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, *that* every one that findeth me shall slay me.

<sup>15</sup>And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him. <sup>16</sup>And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.

### *Cain's descendants*

<sup>17</sup>And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch. <sup>18</sup>And unto Enoch was born Irad: and Irad begat Mehujael: and Mehujael begat Methusael: and Methusael begat Lamech.

4:17  
Ps 49:11



ABEL

Abel was the second child born into the world, but the first one to obey God. All we know about this man is that his parents were Adam and Eve, he was a shepherd, he presented pleasing sacrifices to God, and his life was ended by his jealous older brother, Cain.

The Bible doesn't tell us why God liked Abel's gift and disliked Cain's, but both Cain and Abel knew what God expected. Only Abel obeyed. Throughout history, Abel is remembered for his obedience and faith (Hebrews 11:4), and he is called "righteous" (Matthew 23:35).

The Bible is filled with God's general guidelines and expectations for our lives. It is also filled with more specific directions. Like Abel, we must obey regardless of the cost, and trust God to make things right.

#### **Strengths and accomplishments:**

- First member of the Hall of Faith in Hebrews 11
- First shepherd
- First martyr for truth (Matthew 23:35)

#### **Lessons from his life:**

- God hears those who come to him
- God recognizes the innocent person and sooner or later punishes the guilty

#### **Vital statistics:**

- Where: Just outside of Eden
- Occupation: Shepherd
- Relatives: Parents: Adam and Eve. Brother: Cain.

#### **Key verse:**

"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh" (Hebrews 11:4).

Abel's story is told in Genesis 4:1–8. He is also mentioned in Matthew 23:35; Luke 11:51; Hebrews 11:4 and 12:24.

**4:8–10** This is the first murder—taking a life by shedding human blood. Blood represents life (Leviticus 17:10–14). If blood is removed from a living creature, it will die. Since God created life, only God should take life away.

**4:8–10** Adam and Eve's disobedience brought sin into the human race. They may have thought their sin—eating a "harmless" piece of fruit—wasn't very bad, but notice how quickly their sinful nature developed in the lives of their children. Simple disobedience suddenly degenerated into outright murder. Adam and Eve acted only against God, but Cain acted against both God and man. A small sin has a way of growing out of control. Let God help you with your "little" sins before they turn into tragedies.

**4:11–15** Cain was severely punished for this murder. God judges all sins and punishes appropriately, not out of vengeance, but

because he desires to correct us and restore our fellowship with him. When you're corrected, don't resent it, but renew your fellowship with God.

**4:14** We have heard about only four people so far—Adam, Eve, Cain, and Abel. Two questions arise: Why was Cain worried about being killed by others, and where did he get his wife (see 4:17)?

Adam and Eve had numerous children; they had been told to "replenish the earth" (1:28). Cain's guilt and fear over killing his brother were heavy, and he probably feared repercussions from his family. If he was capable of killing, so were they. The wife Cain chose may have been one of his sisters or a niece. The human race was still genetically pure and there was no fear of side effects from marrying relatives.



<sup>19</sup>And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one *was* Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. <sup>20</sup>And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle. <sup>21</sup>And his brother's name *was* Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ. <sup>22</sup>And Zillah, she also bare Tubal-cain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron: and the sister of Tubal-cain *was* Naamah.

<sup>23</sup>And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt. <sup>24</sup>If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold.

**3. Adam's descendants**

<sup>25</sup>And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, *said she*, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew. <sup>26</sup>And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.

**5** This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; <sup>2</sup>male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created. <sup>3</sup>And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth: <sup>4</sup>and the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters: <sup>5</sup>and all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died.

<sup>6</sup>And Seth lived an hundred and five years, and begat Enos: <sup>7</sup>and Seth lived after he begat Enos eight hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters: <sup>8</sup>and all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years: and he died.

<sup>9</sup>And Enos lived ninety years, and begat Cainan: <sup>10</sup>and Enos lived after he begat Cainan eight hundred and fifteen years, and begat sons and daughters: <sup>11</sup>and all the days of Enos were nine hundred and five years: and he died.

<sup>12</sup>And Cainan lived seventy years, and begat Mahalaleel: <sup>13</sup>and Cainan lived after he begat Mahalaleel eight hundred and forty years, and begat sons and daughters: <sup>14</sup>and all the days of Cainan were nine hundred and ten years: and he died.

<sup>15</sup>And Mahalaleel lived sixty and five years, and begat Jared: <sup>16</sup>and Mahalaleel lived after he begat Jared eight hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters: <sup>17</sup>and all the days of Mahalaleel were eight hundred ninety and five years: and he died.

<sup>18</sup>And Jared lived an hundred sixty and two years, and he begat Enoch: <sup>19</sup>and Jared lived after he begat Enoch eight hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: <sup>20</sup>and all the days of Jared were nine hundred sixty and two years: and he died.

<sup>21</sup>And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: <sup>22</sup>and Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: <sup>23</sup>and all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: <sup>24</sup>and Enoch walked with God: and he *was* not; for God took him.

4:21 organ: flute. 4:22 artificer: craftsman. brass: bronze.

4:23  
Lev 19:18  
Deut 32:35

4:25  
Gen 4:8; 5:3  
1 Chr 1:1  
Luke 3:38

4:26  
Gen 12:8  
1 Kgs 18:24  
Joel 2:32  
Zeph 3:9  
Acts 2:21

5:1  
Gen 1:26; 6:9  
1 Chr 1:1

5:2  
Gen 1:27  
Matt 19:4

5:3  
Gen 1:26; 4:25  
1 Cor 15:49

5:4  
1 Chr 1:1

5:5  
Gen 2:17  
Heb 9:27

5:6  
1 Chr 1:1  
Luke 3:38

5:9  
1 Chr 1:2  
Luke 3:37

5:12  
1 Chr 1:2  
Luke 3:37

5:15  
1 Chr 1:2  
Luke 3:37

5:18  
1 Chr 1:3  
Luke 3:37  
Jude 1:14

5:21  
1 Chr 1:3  
Luke 3:37

5:22  
Gen 6:9; 48:15

5:24  
2 Kgs 2:1, 11  
Ps 73:24  
Heb 11:5

**4:19–26** Unfortunately, when left to themselves, people tend to get worse instead of better. This short summary of Lamech's family shows us the variety of talent and ability God gives humans. It also presents the continuous development of sin as time passes. Another murder has occurred, presumably in self-defense. Violence is on the rise. Two distinct groups are now appearing: (1) those who show indifference to sin and evil, and (2) those who call upon the name of the Lord (the descendants of Seth, 4:26). Seth would take Abel's place as leader of a line of God's faithful people.

**5:1ff** The Bible contains several lists of ancestors, called genealogies. Two basic views concerning these lists include: (1) They are complete, recording the entire history of a family, tribe, or nation, or (2) they are not intended to be exhaustive and may include only famous people or the heads of families. In the original Hebrew, the word for *son* may also be used to mean *descendant*.

Why are genealogies included in the Bible? The Hebrews passed on their beliefs through oral tradition. For many years in many places, writing was primitive or nonexistent. Stories were

told to children who passed them on to their children. Genealogies gave a skeletal outline that helped people remember the stories. For centuries, these genealogies were added to and passed down from family to family. Even more important than preserving family tradition, genealogies were included to confirm the Bible's promise that the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ, would be born into the line of Abraham.

Genealogies point out that people are important to God as individuals. Therefore God refers to people by name, mentioning their life span and descendants. The next time you feel overwhelmed in a vast crowd, remember that the focus of God's attention and love is on the individual—and on you!

**5:3–5** All human beings are related, going back to Adam and Eve. Mankind is a family that shares one flesh and blood. Remember this when prejudice enters your mind or hatred invades your feelings. Each person is a valuable and unique creation of God.

**5:21–24** At first glance it looks as if Enoch fared worse than the other patriarchs: He lived on earth only 365 years! Hebrews 11:5 explains what verse 24 means: Enoch was taken directly to heaven

5:25  
1 Chr 1:3  
Luke 3:36

<sup>25</sup>And Methuselah lived an hundred eighty and seven years, and begat Lamech: <sup>26</sup>and Methuselah lived after he begat Lamech seven hundred eighty and two years, and begat sons and daughters: <sup>27</sup>and all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years: and he died.

5:29  
Gen 3:17  
1 Chr 1:3  
Luke 3:36  
Rom 8:20

<sup>28</sup>And Lamech lived an hundred eighty and two years, and begat a son: <sup>29</sup>and he called his name Noah, saying, This *same* shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD hath cursed. <sup>30</sup>And Lamech lived after he begat Noah five hundred ninety and five years, and begat sons and daughters: <sup>31</sup>and all the days of Lamech were seven hundred seventy and seven years: and he died.

5:32  
Gen 7:6; 9:18

<sup>32</sup>And Noah was five hundred years old: and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

### C. THE STORY OF NOAH (6:1—11:32)

Earth was no longer the perfect paradise that God had intended. It is frightening to see how quickly all of humanity forgot about God. Incredibly, in all the world, only one man and his family still worshiped God. That man was Noah. Because of his faithfulness and obedience, God saved him and his family from a vast flood that destroyed every other human being on earth. This section shows us how God hates sin and judges those who enjoy it.



CAIN

Conflicts between children in a family seem inevitable. Sibling relationships allow both competition and cooperation. In most cases, the mixture of loving and fighting eventually creates a strong bond between brothers and sisters. It isn't unusual, though, to hear parents say, "They fight so much I hope they don't kill each other before they grow up." In Cain's case, the troubling potential became a tragedy.

Cain got angry. Furious. Both he and his brother Abel had made sacrifices to God, and his had been rejected. Cain's reaction gives us a clue that his attitude was probably wrong from the start. Cain had a choice to make. He could correct his attitude about his sacrifice to God, or he could take out his anger on his brother. His decision is a clear reminder of how often we are aware of opposite choices, yet choose the wrong just as Cain did. We may not be choosing to murder, but we are still intentionally choosing what we shouldn't.

The feelings motivating our behavior can't always be changed by simple thought-power. But here we can begin to experience God's willingness to help. Asking for his help to do what is right can prevent us from doing what we will later regret.

#### Strengths and accomplishments:

- First human child
- First to follow in father's profession, farming

#### Weaknesses and mistakes:

- When disappointed, reacted in anger
- Took the negative option even when a positive possibility was offered
- Was the first murderer

#### Lessons from his life:

- Anger is not necessarily a sin, but actions motivated by anger can be sinful. Anger should be the energy behind good action, not evil action
- What we offer to God must be from the heart—the best we are and have
- The consequences of sin may last a lifetime

#### Vital statistics:

- Where: Near Eden, which was probably located in present-day Iraq or Iran
- Occupation: Farmer, then nomad
- Relatives: Parents: Adam and Eve. Brothers: Abel, Seth, and others not mentioned by name.

#### Key verse:

"If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door" (Genesis 4:7).

Cain's story is told in Genesis 4:1–17. He is also mentioned in Hebrews 11:4; 1 John 3:12; Jude 1:11.

without seeing death. Enoch, then, lived longer than any of the other patriarchs, for he never died at all.

**5:25–27** How did these people live so long? Some believe that the ages listed here were lengths of family dynasties rather than ages of individual men. Those who think these were actual ages offer three explanations: (1) The human race was genetically purer in this early time period with less disease to shorten the life span; (2) the "waters which were above the firmament" (1:7)

kept out harmful cosmic rays and shielded people from environmental factors that hasten aging; (3) God gave people longer lives so they would have time to "replenish the earth" (1:28) and make a significant impact for him.



1. The great flood

**6** And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, <sup>2</sup>that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. **6:1**  
Gen 1:28

<sup>3</sup>And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. <sup>4</sup>There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. **6:3**  
Ps 78:39  
1 Pet 3:20

<sup>5</sup>And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. <sup>6</sup>And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. <sup>7</sup>And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. <sup>8</sup>But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. **6:4**  
Num 13:33  
**6:5**  
Ps 14:1-3

<sup>9</sup>These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God. <sup>10</sup>And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. **6:6**  
Exod 32:14  
Num 23:19  
1 Sam 15:11, 35  
2 Sam 24:16

<sup>11</sup>The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. <sup>12</sup>And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. **6:7**  
Deut 29:20  
**6:8**  
Exod 33:17

<sup>13</sup>And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. <sup>14</sup>Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. <sup>15</sup>And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. <sup>16</sup>A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it. **6:9**  
Job 1:1  
Ezek 14:14

<sup>17</sup>And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die. <sup>18</sup>But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee. <sup>19</sup>And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female. <sup>20</sup>Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive. <sup>21</sup>And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them. **6:11**  
Deut 31:29  
Judg 2:19  
Ezek 8:17

<sup>22</sup>Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he. **6:12**  
Ps 14:1-3

**6:13**  
Isa 34:1-4  
Ezek 7:2-3

**6:14**  
Exod 2:3  
1 Pet 3:20

**6:17**  
Ps 29:10  
2 Pet 2:5

**6:18**  
Gen 9:9-16; 17:7; 19:12

**6:20**  
Gen 7:3

**6:21**  
Gen 1:29

**6:22**  
Gen 7:5  
Exod 40:16

**6:2** fair: beautiful.

**6:1-4** Some people believe that the “sons of God” were fallen angels (see 2 Peter 2:4-6; Jude 1:6-7). Others believe this could not have happened (see Matthew 22:30; Mark 12:25) and that this phrase refers to the descendants of Seth who intermarried with Cain’s descendants. Either way, the result would have weakened the good influence of the faithful and increased moral depravity in the world, resulting in an explosion of evil.

**6:3** What patience God showed, allowing the people of Noah’s day 120 years to change their sinful ways. God shows his great patience with us as well. He is giving us time to quit living our way and begin living his way, the way he shows us in his Word. While 120 years seems like a long time, eventually time ran out and the floodwaters swept across the earth. Your time also may be running out. Turn to God to forgive your sins.

**6:4** The giants mentioned here probably were nine or ten feet tall. This same Hebrew term was used to name a tall race of people in Numbers 13:33. Goliath, who was nine feet tall, appears in 1 Samuel 17. The giants used their physical advantage to oppress the people around them.

**6:6, 7** Does this mean God regretted creating humanity? Was he admitting he made a mistake? No, God does not change his mind (1 Samuel 15:29). Instead, he was expressing sorrow for what the people had done to themselves, as a parent might express sorrow over a rebellious child.

God was sorry that the people chose sin and death instead of a relationship with him.

**6:6-8** The people’s sin grieved God’s heart. Our sins break God’s heart as much as sin did in Noah’s day. Noah, however, pleased God, although he was far from perfect. We can follow Noah’s example and find “grace in the eyes of the LORD” in spite of the sin that surrounds us.

**6:9** Saying that Noah was “perfect in his generations” does not mean that he never sinned (the Bible records one of his sins in 9:20ff). Rather it means that Noah wholeheartedly loved and obeyed God. For a lifetime he walked step by step in faith, a living example in his generation. Like Noah, we live in a world filled with evil. Are we influencing others or being influenced by them?

**6:15** A cubit was about 18 inches long. The boat Noah built was no canoe! Picture yourself building a boat the length of one and a half football fields and as high as a four-story building. The ark was exactly six times longer than it was wide—the same ratio used by modern shipbuilders. This huge boat was probably built miles from any body of water by only a few faithful men who believed God’s promises and obeyed his commands.

**6:22** Noah got right to work when God told him to build the ark. The other people must have been warned about the coming disaster (1 Peter 3:20), but apparently they did not expect it to happen. Today things haven’t changed much. Each day thousands of people

7:1  
Gen 6:18  
Matt 24:38  
Luke 17:26-27  
Heb 11:7  
1 Pet 3:20

7:2  
Lev 11:1-47  
Deut 14:3-20  
Ezek 44:23

7:4  
Gen 6:7, 13

7:6  
Gen 5:32

7:7  
Gen 6:18

7:9  
Gen 6:22

7:11  
Ps 78:23  
Ezek 26:19  
Mal 3:10

7:13  
1 Pet 3:20  
2 Pet 2:5

7:15  
Gen 6:19; 7:9

**7** And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. <sup>2</sup>Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that *are* not clean by two, the male and his female. <sup>3</sup>Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth. <sup>4</sup>For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth. <sup>5</sup>And Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him.

<sup>6</sup>And Noah *was* six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth. <sup>7</sup>And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood. <sup>8</sup>Of clean beasts, and of beasts that *are* not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the earth, <sup>9</sup>there went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah. <sup>10</sup>And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth. <sup>11</sup>In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. <sup>12</sup>And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.

<sup>13</sup>In the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark; <sup>14</sup>they, and every beast after his kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind, and every fowl after his kind, every bird of every sort. <sup>15</sup>And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life.

7:13 *selfsame*: very same.



NOAH

The story of Noah's life involves not one, but two great and tragic floods. The world in Noah's day was flooded with evil. Of God's people, only Noah remembered the God of creation, perfection, and love. God's response to the severe situation was a 120-year-long last chance, during which he had Noah build a graphic illustration of the message of his life. For Noah, obedience meant a long-term commitment to a project.

Many of us have trouble sticking to any project, whether or not it is directed by God. It is interesting that the length of Noah's obedience was greater than the life span of people today. Our only comparable long-term project is our very lives. But perhaps this is one great challenge Noah's life gives us—to live an entire lifetime of obedience and gratitude.

**Strengths and accomplishments:**

- Only follower of God left in his generation
- Second father of the human race
- Man of patience, consistency, and obedience
- First major shipbuilder

**Weakness and mistake:**

- Got drunk and embarrassed himself in front of his sons

**Lessons from his life:**

- God is faithful to those who obey him
- God does not always protect us from trouble, but cares for us in spite of trouble
- Obedience is a long-term commitment
- A man may be faithful but his sinful nature always travels with him

**Vital statistics:**

- Where: We're not told how far from the Garden of Eden people had settled
- Occupation: Farmer, shipbuilder, preacher
- Relatives: Grandfather: Methuselah. Father: Lamech. Sons: Ham, Shem, and Japheth.

**Key verse:**

"Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he" (Genesis 6:22).

Noah's story is told in Genesis 5:28—10:32. He is also mentioned in 1 Chronicles 1:4; Isaiah 54:9; Ezekiel 14:14–20; Matthew 24:37, 38; Luke 3:36; 17:26, 27; Hebrews 11:7; 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5.

are warned of God's inevitable judgment, yet most of them don't really believe it will happen. Don't expect people to welcome or accept your message of God's coming judgment on sin. Those who don't believe in God will deny his judgment and try to get you to deny God as well. But remember God's promise to Noah to keep him safe. This can inspire you to trust God for deliverance in judgment that is sure to come.

**7:1ff** Pairs of every animal joined Noah in the ark; seven pairs were taken of those animals used for sacrifice. Scholars have estimated that almost 45,000 animals could have fit into the ark.

<sup>16</sup>And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the LORD shut him in.

<sup>17</sup>And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth. <sup>18</sup>And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters. <sup>19</sup>And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that *were* under the whole heaven, were covered. <sup>20</sup>Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered. <sup>21</sup>And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: <sup>22</sup>all in whose nostrils *was* the breath of life, of all that *was* in the dry land, died. <sup>23</sup>And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained *alive*, and they that *were* with him in the ark. <sup>24</sup>And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.

7:19  
Ps 104:6

7:20  
2 Pet 3:6

7:23  
Matt 24:38-39  
Luke 17:26-27  
1 Pet 3:20  
2 Pet 2:5

7:24  
Gen 8:3

**8** And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that *was* with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged; <sup>2</sup>the fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained; <sup>3</sup>and the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated. <sup>4</sup>And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat. <sup>5</sup>And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth *month*, on the first *day* of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen.

8:1  
Gen 19:29; 30:22  
Exod 2:24; 14:21  
Job 12:15  
Isa 44:27

8:2  
Gen 7:4, 12

8:4  
Gen 7:20

<sup>6</sup>And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made: <sup>7</sup>and he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth. <sup>8</sup>Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground; <sup>9</sup>but the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters *were* on the face of the whole earth: then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark. <sup>10</sup>And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; <sup>11</sup>and the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth *was* an olive leaf plucked off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. <sup>12</sup>And he stayed yet other seven days; and sent forth the dove; which returned not again unto him any more.

8:7  
Lev 11:15  
Deut 14:14  
1 Kgs 17:4  
Luke 12:24

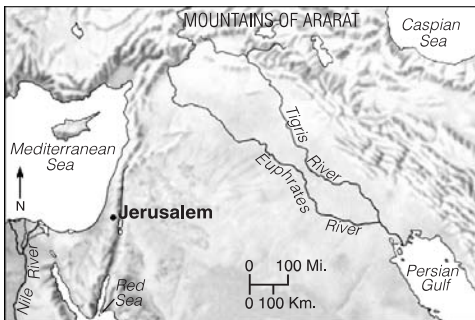
8:8  
Isa 60:8  
Hos 11:11  
Matt 10:16

<sup>13</sup>And it came to pass in the sixth hundredth and first year, in the first *month*, the first *day* of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry. <sup>14</sup>And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried.

8:13  
Gen 5:32

8:1 asswaged: subsided. 8:11 abated: lowered.

**7:16** Many have wondered how this animal kingdom roundup happened. Did Noah and his sons spend years collecting all the animals? In reality the creation, along with Noah, was doing just



**MOUNTAINS OF ARARAT** The boat touched land in the mountains of Ararat, located in present-day Turkey. There it rested for almost eight months before Noah, his family, and the animals stepped onto dry land.

as God had commanded. There seemed to be no problem gathering the animals—God took care of the details of that job while Noah was doing his part by building the ark. Often we do just the opposite of Noah. We worry about details in our lives over which we have no control, while neglecting specific areas (such as attitudes, relationships, responsibilities) that *are* under our control. Like Noah, concentrate on the things God has given you to do, and leave the rest to him.

**7:17–24** Was the flood a local event, or did it cover the entire earth? A universal flood was certainly possible. Enough water exists in the oceans to cover all dry land (the earth began that way; see 1:9, 10). Afterward, God promised never again to destroy the earth with a flood. Thus this flood must have either covered the entire earth or destroyed all the inhabitants of the earth. Remember, God’s reason for sending the flood was to destroy all the earth’s wickedness. It would have taken a major flood to accomplish this.

**8:6–16** Noah occasionally sent a bird out to test the earth and see if it was dry, but he didn’t get out of the ark until God told him to. He was waiting for God’s timing. God knew that even though the water was gone, the earth was not dry enough for Noah and his family to venture out. What patience Noah showed, especially after spending an entire year inside his boat! We, like Noah, must trust God to give us patience during those difficult times when we must wait.

**8:16**  
Gen 7:13

**8:17**  
Gen 1:22

**8:20**  
Gen 4:4; 12:7;  
13:18; 22:2

**8:21**  
Gen 3:17  
Exod 29:18, 25  
Lev 1:9, 13  
Isa 54:9

**8:22**  
Ps 74:17

<sup>15</sup>And God spake unto Noah, saying, <sup>16</sup>Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee. <sup>17</sup>Bring forth with thee every living thing that *is* with thee, of all flesh, *both* of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth. <sup>18</sup>And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him: <sup>19</sup>every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl, *and* whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their kinds, went forth out of the ark.

<sup>20</sup>And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. <sup>21</sup>And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart *is* evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. <sup>22</sup>While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.

## 2. Repopulating the earth

**9** And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. <sup>2</sup>And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth *upon* the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. <sup>3</sup>Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. <sup>4</sup>But flesh with the life thereof, *which is* the blood thereof, shall ye not eat. <sup>5</sup>And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. <sup>6</sup>Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man. <sup>7</sup>And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.

### *The rainbow*

<sup>8</sup>And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, <sup>9</sup>And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; <sup>10</sup>and with every living creature that *is* with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. <sup>11</sup>And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.

<sup>12</sup>And God said, This *is* the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that *is* with you, for perpetual generations: <sup>13</sup>I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. <sup>14</sup>And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: <sup>15</sup>and I will remember my covenant, which *is* between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. <sup>16</sup>And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that *is* upon the earth. <sup>17</sup>And God said unto Noah, This *is* the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that *is* upon the earth.

### *Noah's descendants*

<sup>18</sup>And the sons of Noah, that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth: and Ham *is* the father of Canaan. <sup>19</sup>These *are* the three sons of Noah: and of them was the whole earth overspread.

**9:3** *meat*: food.

**9:1**  
Gen 1:22

**9:2**  
Gen 1:26-29  
Ps 8:6-8

**9:3**  
Ps 104:14

**9:4**  
Lev 3:17; 7:26;  
17:10  
Deut 12:16  
Acts 15:20, 29

**9:5**  
Exod 21:28-32

**9:6**  
Exod 20:13; 21:12  
Num 35:33

**9:11**  
Isa 24:5

**9:12**  
Gen 17:11

**9:13**  
Ezek 1:28

**9:15**  
Deut 7:9

**8:21, 22** Countless times throughout the Bible we see God showing his love and patience toward men and women in order to save them. Realizing that their hearts are evil, he continues to try to reach them. When we sin or fall away from God, we surely deserve to be destroyed by his judgment. But God has promised never again to destroy everything on earth until the judgment day when Jesus returns to destroy evil forever. Now every change of season is a reminder of his promise.

**9:5, 6** Here God explains why murder is so wrong: To kill a person is to kill one made in God's image. Since all people are made in God's image, all people possess the qualities that distinguish us from animals: morality, reason, creativity, and self-worth. When we

interact with others, we are interacting with beings made like God, beings to whom God offers eternal life. God intended us to recognize his image in all people.

**9:8-17** Noah stepped out of the ark onto an earth devoid of human life. But God gave him a reassuring promise. This promise, or covenant, had three parts: (1) Never again will a flood do such destruction; (2) as long as the earth remains, the seasons will always come as expected; (3) the rainbow will be a sign to all that God will keep his promises. The earth's order and seasons are still preserved, and rainbows still remind us of God's faithfulness to his Word.

<sup>20</sup>And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: <sup>21</sup>and he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. <sup>22</sup>And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. <sup>23</sup>And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness.

9:21  
Gen 19:35  
9:22  
Hab 2:15

<sup>24</sup>And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him.

9:25  
Deut 27:16

<sup>25</sup>And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. <sup>26</sup>And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. <sup>27</sup>God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

9:26  
Gen 14:20

<sup>28</sup>And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years. <sup>29</sup>And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years: and he died.

9:27  
Gen 10:2-5  
Isa 66:19

9:29  
Gen 2:17

**10** Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth: and unto them were sons born after the flood.

10:1  
Gen 9:18  
1 Chr 1:4

<sup>2</sup>The sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras. <sup>3</sup>And the sons of Gomer; Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah. <sup>4</sup>And the sons of Javan; Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim. <sup>5</sup>By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations.

10:2  
1 Chr 1:5-7  
Isa 66:19  
Ezek 27:13;  
38:2-3, 6

<sup>6</sup>And the sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan. <sup>7</sup>And the sons of Cush; Seba, and Havilah, and Sabtah, and Raamah, and Sabtechah: and the sons of Raamah; Sheba, and Dedan.

10:3  
Jer 51:27  
Ezek 27:14

10:4  
1 Chr 1:6-7

<sup>8</sup>And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. <sup>9</sup>He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD. <sup>10</sup>And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. <sup>11</sup>Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah, <sup>12</sup>and Resen between Nineveh and Calah: the same is a great city.

10:6  
1 Chr 1:8-10  
10:7  
Isa 43:3  
Ezek 27:15, 20, 22

10:10  
Gen 11:9

<sup>13</sup>And Mizraim begat Ludim, and Ananim, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhim, <sup>14</sup>and Pathrusim, and Casluhim, (out of whom came Philistim,) and Caphtorim.

10:11  
Mic 5:6

<sup>15</sup>And Canaan begat Sidon his firstborn, and Heth, <sup>16</sup>and the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Gargasite, <sup>17</sup>and the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite, <sup>18</sup>and the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite: and afterward were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad. <sup>19</sup>And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza; as thou goest, unto Sodom, and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lasha.

10:13  
Jer 46:9

10:14  
1 Chr 1:12

<sup>20</sup>These are the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, and in their nations.

10:15  
Gen 15:20; 23:3  
1 Chr 1:13  
Jer 47:4

<sup>21</sup>Unto Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber, the brother of Japheth the elder, even to him were children born. <sup>22</sup>The children of Shem; Elam, and Asshur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram. <sup>23</sup>And the children of Aram; Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and Mash. <sup>24</sup>And Arphaxad begat Salah; and Salah begat Eber. <sup>25</sup>And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg; for in his days was the earth divided; and his brother's name was Joktan. <sup>26</sup>And Joktan begat Almodad, and Sheleph, and Hazarmaveth, and Jerah, <sup>27</sup>and Hadoram, and Uzal, and Diklah, <sup>28</sup>and Obal, and Abimael, and Sheba, <sup>29</sup>and Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobab: all these were the sons of Joktan. <sup>30</sup>And their dwelling was from Mesha, as thou goest unto Sephar a mount of the east. <sup>31</sup>These are the sons of Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations.

10:16  
Gen 15:18-21

10:19  
Gen 14:2

10:22  
2 Kgs 15:29  
Isa 66:19

10:23  
Job 1:1

10:24  
Luke 3:35

<sup>32</sup>These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: and by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood.

10:32  
Gen 9:19; 10:1

9:20 husbandman: farmer. 9:22 without: outside.

**9:20-27** Noah, the great hero of faith, got drunk—a poor example of godliness to his sons. Perhaps this story is included to show us that even godly people can sin and that their bad influence affects their families. The possibility of evil still existed in the hearts of Noah and his family. Ham's mocking attitude revealed a severe lack of respect for his father and for God.

**9:25** This verse has been wrongfully used to support racial prejudice and even slavery. Noah's curse, however, wasn't directed toward any particular race, but rather at the Canaanite nation—a nation God knew would become wicked. The curse was fulfilled when the Israelites entered the Promised Land and drove the Canaanites out (see the book of Joshua).

**10:8-10** Not much is known about Nimrod except that he was a mighty hunter. But people with great gifts can become proud, and that is probably what happened to Nimrod. Some consider him the founder of the great, godless Babylonian Empire.



11:2  
Gen 10:10; 14:1  
Isa 11:11

11:3  
Gen 14:10

11:4  
2 Sam 8:13

11:5  
Gen 18:21  
Exod 19:11

11:6  
Gen 9:19; 11:1

11:7  
Gen 1:26

11:8  
Gen 9:19

11:9  
Gen 10:10

### 3. The tower of Babel

**11** And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. <sup>2</sup>And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. <sup>3</sup>And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. <sup>4</sup>And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top *may reach* unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

<sup>5</sup>And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. <sup>6</sup>And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. <sup>7</sup>Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. <sup>8</sup>So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. <sup>9</sup>Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

#### *Shem's descendants*

<sup>10</sup>These *are* the generations of Shem: Shem *was* an hundred years old, and begat Arphaxad two years after the flood: <sup>11</sup>and Shem lived after he begat Arphaxad five hundred years, and begat sons and daughters.

<sup>12</sup>And Arphaxad lived five and thirty years, and begat Salah: <sup>13</sup>and Arphaxad lived after he begat Salah four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters.

<sup>14</sup>And Salah lived thirty years, and begat Eber: <sup>15</sup>and Salah lived after he begat Eber four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters.

<sup>16</sup>And Eber lived four and thirty years, and begat Peleg: <sup>17</sup>and Eber lived after he begat Peleg four hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters.

<sup>18</sup>And Peleg lived thirty years, and begat Reu: <sup>19</sup>and Peleg lived after he begat Reu two hundred and nine years, and begat sons and daughters.

<sup>20</sup>And Reu lived two and thirty years, and begat Serug: <sup>21</sup>and Reu lived after he begat Serug two hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters.

<sup>22</sup>And Serug lived thirty years, and begat Nahor: <sup>23</sup>and Serug lived after he begat Nahor two hundred years, and begat sons and daughters.

11:8 left off: ceased.

11:10  
Gen 10:22-25  
Luke 3:36

11:12  
Luke 3:36

11:13  
1 Chr 1:17

11:14  
Luke 3:35

11:16  
Luke 3:35

11:18  
Luke 3:35

11:20  
Luke 3:35

11:22  
Luke 3:34

#### BIBLE NATIONS DESCENDED FROM NOAH'S SONS

##### *Shem*

Hebrews  
Chaldeans  
Assyrians  
Persians  
Syrians

##### *Ham*

Canaanites  
Egyptians  
Philistines  
Hittites  
Amorites

##### *Japheth*

Greeks  
Thracians  
Scythians

Shem's descendants were called Semites. Abraham, David, and Jesus descended from Shem. Ham's descendants settled in Canaan, Egypt and the rest of Africa. Japheth's descendants settled for the most part in Europe and Asia Minor.

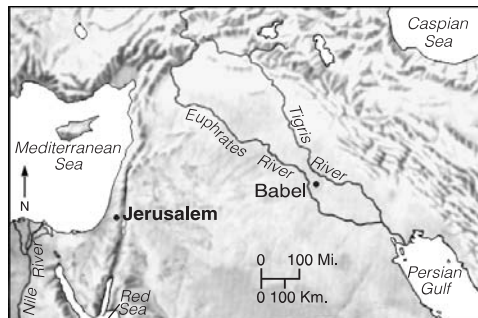
**11:3** The brick used to build this tower was a man-made substance, not as hard as stone. "Slime" was a sticky, tar-like substance.

**11:3, 4** The tower of Babel was most likely a ziggurat, a common structure in the area at this time. Most often built as temples, ziggurats looked like pyramids with steps or ramps leading up the sides. Ziggurats stood as high as 300 feet and were often just as wide; thus they were the focal point of the city. The people in this story built their tower as a monument to their own greatness.

**11:4** The tower of Babel was a great human achievement, a wonder of the world. But it was a monument to the people themselves rather than to God. We often build monuments to ourselves (expensive clothes, big house, fancy car, important job) to call attention to our achievements. These may not be wrong in themselves, but when we use them to give us identity and self-worth, they have God's place in our lives. We are free to develop in many areas, but we are not free to think we have replaced God. Are there "towers" like this in your life?

**11:10-27** Here and in 10:22-31 appears a list of Shem's descendants, who are blessed (9:26). Because of that blessing, from Shem's line came Abram and the entire Jewish nation,

which would eventually conquer the land of Canaan in the days of Joshua.



**THE TOWER OF BABEL** The plain between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers offered a perfect location for the city and tower, "whose top may reach unto heaven."

<sup>24</sup>And Nahor lived nine and twenty years, and begat Terah: <sup>25</sup>and Nahor lived after he begat Terah an hundred and nineteen years, and begat sons and daughters.

**11:24**  
Josh 24:2  
Luke 3:34

<sup>26</sup>And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

**11:26**  
Gen 22:20  
1 Chr 1:26-27  
Luke 3:34

<sup>27</sup>Now these *are* the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot. <sup>28</sup>And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees. <sup>29</sup>And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife *was* Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Ischah. <sup>30</sup>But Sarai was barren; she *had* no child.

**11:29**  
Gen 17:15;  
20:11-12; 22:20

<sup>31</sup>And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there. <sup>32</sup>And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran.

**11:30**  
Gen 16:1; 18:11;  
25:21

1 Sam 1:5  
Luke 1:7

**11:31**  
Gen 27:43  
Josh 24:2  
Acts 7:4

**D. THE STORY OF ABRAHAM (12:1—25:18)**

Despite God's swift judgment of sin, most people ignored him and continued to sin. But a handful of people really tried to follow him. One of these was Abraham. God appeared to Abraham one day and promised to make his descendants into a great nation. Abraham's part of the agreement was to obey God. Through sharp testing and an incident that almost destroyed his family, Abraham remained faithful to God. Throughout this section we discover how to live a life of faith.

**1. God promises a nation to Abraham**

**12** Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: <sup>2</sup>and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: <sup>3</sup>and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

**12:1**  
Gen 15:7  
†Acts 7:3  
Heb 11:8

<sup>4</sup>So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram *was* seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. <sup>5</sup>And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came. <sup>6</sup>And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite *was* then in the land.

**12:2**  
Gen 13:16; 15:5;  
17:4; 18:18; 22:17  
Zech 8:13

**12:3**  
Gen 22:18; 26:4  
Exod 23:22  
Acts 3:25  
†Gal 3:8

**12:4**  
Gen 11:26, 31

**12:6**  
Gen 33:18; 35:4  
Deut 11:30

**11:26–28** Abram grew up in Ur of the Chaldeans (Chaldees), an important city in the ancient world. Archaeologists have discovered evidence of a flourishing civilization there in Abram's day. The city carried on an extensive trade with its neighbors and had a vast library. Growing up in Ur, Abram was probably well-educated.

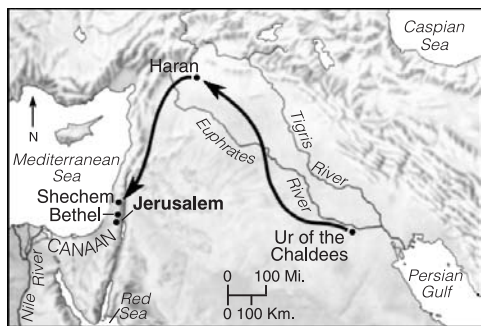
**11:31** Terah left Ur to go to Canaan but settled in Haran instead. Why did he stop halfway? It may have been his health, the climate, or even fear. But this did not change Abram's calling ("the LORD had said unto Abram" 12:1). He had respect for his father's leadership, but when Terah died Abram moved on to Canaan. God's will

may come in stages. Just as the time in Haran was a transition period for Abram, so God may give us transition periods and times of waiting to help us depend on him and trust his timing. If we patiently do his will during the transition times, we will be better prepared to serve him as we should when he calls us.

**12:1–3** Abram moved out in faith from Ur to Haran and finally to Canaan. God then established a covenant with him, telling him that he would found a great nation. Not only would this nation be blessed, God said, but the other nations of the earth would be blessed through Abram's descendants. Israel, the nation that would come from Abram, was to follow God and influence those with whom it came in contact. Through Abram's family tree, Jesus Christ was born to save humanity. Through Christ, all people can have a personal relationship with God and be blessed beyond measure.

**12:2** God promised to bless Abram and make him great, but God had one condition. Abram had to do what God wanted him to do. This meant leaving his home and friends and traveling to a new land where God promised to build a great nation from Abram's family. Abram obeyed, walking away from his home for God's promise of even greater things in the future. God may be trying to lead you to a place of greater service and usefulness for him. Don't let the comfort and security of your present position make you miss God's plan for you.

**12:5** God planned to develop a nation of people he would call his own. He called Abram from the godless, man-centered city of Ur to a fertile region called Canaan, where a God-centered, moral nation could be established. Though small in dimension, the land of Canaan was the focal point for most of the history of Israel as well as for the rise of Christianity. This small land given to one man, Abram, has had a tremendous impact on world history.



**ABRAM'S JOURNEY TO CANAAN** Abram, Sarai, and Lot traveled from Ur of the Chaldees (Chaldeans) to Canaan by way of Haran. Though indirect, this route followed the rivers rather than attempting to cross the vast desert.



12:7  
Gen 13:15  
Gal 3:16

12:8  
Gen 4:26; 8:20;  
22:9

12:9  
Gen 13:1; 20:1

12:10  
Gen 26:1; 42:5

12:11  
Gen 29:17

12:12  
Gen 20:11

12:16  
Gen 20:14; 24:35

12:17  
1 Chr 16:21  
Ps 105:14

12:18  
Gen 20:9-10

12:19  
Gen 20:5; 26:9

<sup>7</sup>And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him. <sup>8</sup>And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, *having* Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD. <sup>9</sup>And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south.

<sup>10</sup>And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine *was* grievous in the land. <sup>11</sup>And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou *art* a fair woman to look upon: <sup>12</sup>therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This *is* his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. <sup>13</sup>Say, I pray thee, thou *art* my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee.

<sup>14</sup>And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she *was* very fair. <sup>15</sup>The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. <sup>16</sup>And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maid-servants, and she asses, and camels.

<sup>17</sup>And the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife. <sup>18</sup>And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What *is* this *that* thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she *was* thy wife? <sup>19</sup>Why saidst thou, She *is* my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take *her*, and go thy way. <sup>20</sup>And Pharaoh commanded *his* men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had.

## 2. Abraham and Lot

### *Abraham and Lot separate*

**13** And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south. <sup>2</sup>And Abram *was* very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. <sup>3</sup>And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai; <sup>4</sup>unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD.

12:16 *entreated*: treated.

13:1  
Gen 12:9

13:2  
Gen 12:5

13:3  
Gen 12:8-9

**12:7** Altars were used in many religions, but for God's people, altars were more than places of sacrifice. For them, altars symbolized communion with God and commemorated notable encounters with him. Built of rough stones and earth, they often remained in place for years as continual reminders of God's protection and promises.

Abram regularly built altars to God for two reasons: (1) for prayer and worship, and (2) to remember God's promise to bless him. He couldn't survive spiritually without regularly renewing his love and loyalty to God. Building altars helped Abram remember that God was at the center of his life. Regular worship helps us to remember what God desires and motivates us to obey him.

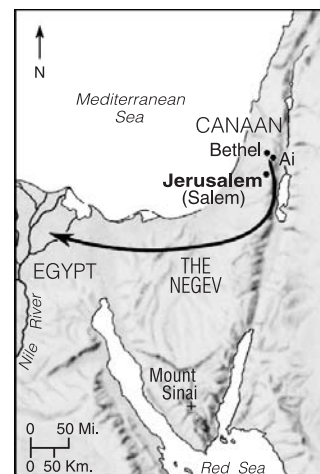
**12:10** When famine struck, Abram went to Egypt where there was food. Why would God allow a famine in the land to which he had just called Abram? This was a test of Abram's faith. Abram didn't question God's leading when he faced this difficulty. Many believers find that when they determine to follow God, they immediately encounter great obstacles. The next time you face such a test, don't try to second-guess what God is doing. Use the intelligence God gave you, as Abram did when he temporarily moved to Egypt, and wait for new opportunities.

**12:11–13** Abram, acting out of fear, asked Sarai to tell a half-truth by saying she was his sister. She *was* his half-sister, but she was also his wife.

Abram's intent was to deceive the Egyptians. He feared that if they knew the truth, they would kill him to get Sarai. Sarai would have been a desirable addition to Pharaoh's harem because of her wealth, beauty, and potential for political alliance. As her brother, Abram would have been given a place of honor. As her husband, however, his life would be in danger, for Sarai could not enter Pharaoh's harem unless Abram was dead. So Abram lost faith in God's protection, even after all God had promised him, and told

a half-truth. This is a lesson in how lying compounds the effects of sin. When he lied, Abram's problems multiplied.

**13:1, 2** In Abram's day, sheep and cattle owners could acquire great wealth. Abram's wealth included not only money, but also livestock. These animals were a valuable commodity used for food, clothing, tent material, and sacrifices. They were often traded for other goods and services.



### ABRAM'S JOURNEY TO EGYPT

A famine could cause the loss of a shepherd's wealth. So Abram traveled through the Negev Desert to Egypt, where there was plenty of food and good land for his flocks.

<sup>5</sup>And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. <sup>6</sup>And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. <sup>7</sup>And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.

<sup>8</sup>And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. <sup>9</sup>Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if *thou wilt take* the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if *thou depart* to the right hand, then I will go to the left.

<sup>10</sup>And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, *even* as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. <sup>11</sup>Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other. <sup>12</sup>Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. <sup>13</sup>But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.

<sup>14</sup>And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: <sup>15</sup>for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. <sup>16</sup>And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, *then* shall thy seed also be numbered. <sup>17</sup>Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.

<sup>18</sup>Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD.

*Abraham rescues Lot*

**14** And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations; <sup>2</sup>that these made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar. <sup>3</sup>All these were joined together in the vale of Siddim, which is the Salt Sea. <sup>4</sup>Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

<sup>5</sup>And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him, and smote the Rephaims in Ashteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzims in Ham, and the Emims in Shaveh Kiriathaim, <sup>6</sup>and the Horites in their mount Seir, unto El-paran, which is by the wilderness. <sup>7</sup>And they returned, and came to En-mishpat, which is Kadesh, and smote all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, that dwelt in Hazezon-tamar.

13:6 substance: possessions. 14:5 smote: attacked.

13:5  
Gen 12:5  
13:6  
Gen 12:5; 36:7  
13:7  
Gen 12:6; 26:20  
13:8  
Prov 15:18; 20:3  
13:9  
Gen 20:15  
13:10  
Gen 2:8-10  
13:13  
Gen 18:20  
Num 32:23  
Isa 1:10; 3:9  
2 Pet 2:8  
13:14  
Gen 28:14  
Deut 3:27; 34:1-4  
13:15  
Gal 3:16  
Gen 12:2, 7; 15:18;  
17:7-8  
13:16  
Num 23:10  
13:17  
Num 13:17-25  
13:18  
Gen 14:13; 18:1  
14:1  
Gen 10:10; 11:2  
14:2  
Gen 10:19; 13:10  
Deut 29:23  
14:3  
Num 34:3, 12  
Deut 3:17  
Josh 3:16  
14:5  
Gen 15:20  
Deut 2:10, 20; 3:11  
Josh 13:19  
14:7  
Gen 16:14; 20:1  
Num 13:26  
Deut 1:4  
2 Chr 20:2

**13:5-9** Facing a potential conflict with his nephew Lot, Abram took the initiative in settling the dispute. He gave Lot his first choice, even though Abram, being older, had the right to choose first. Abram also showed a willingness to risk being cheated. Abram's example shows us how to respond to difficult family situations: (1) Take the initiative in resolving conflicts; (2) let others have first choice, even if that means not getting what we want; (3) put family peace above personal desires.

**13:7, 8** Surrounded by hostile neighbors, the herdsmen of Abram and Lot should have pulled together. Instead, they let petty jealousy tear them apart. A similar situation exists today. Many Christians argue while Satan is at work all around them.

Rivalries, arguments, and disagreements among believers can be destructive in three ways. (1) They damage goodwill, trust, and peace—the foundations of good human relations. (2) They hamper progress toward important goals. (3) They make us self-centered rather than love-centered. Jesus understood how destructive arguments among brothers could be. In his final prayer before being betrayed and arrested, Jesus asked God that his followers be "one" (John 17:21).

**13:10, 11** Lot's character is revealed by his choices. He took the best share of the land even though it meant living near Sodom, a city known for its sin. He was greedy for the best, without thinking about his uncle Abram's needs or what was fair. Life presents a series of choices. We too can choose the best

while ignoring the needs and feelings of others. But this kind of choice, as Lot's life shows, leads to problems. When we stop making choices in God's direction, our only option is to make choices in the wrong direction.

**13:12** Good pasture and available water seemed like a wise choice to Lot at first. But he failed to recognize that wicked Sodom could provide temptations strong enough to destroy his family. Have you chosen to live or work in a "Sodom"? Even though you may be strong enough to resist the temptations, other members of your family may not be. While God commands us to reach people in the "Sodom" near us, we must be careful not to become like the very people we are trying to reach.

**14:4-16** Who was Chedorlaomer, and why was he important? In Abram's time, most cities had their own king. Wars and rivalries among kings were common. A conquered city paid tribute to the victorious king. Nothing is known about Chedorlaomer except what we read in the Bible, but apparently he was quite powerful. Five cities including Sodom had paid tribute to him for 12 years. The five cities formed an alliance and rebelled by withholding tribute. Chedorlaomer reacted swiftly and reconquered them all. When he defeated Sodom, he captured Lot, his family, and his possessions. Abram, with only 318 men, chased Chedorlaomer's army and attacked him near Damascus. With God's help, he defeated them and recovered Lot, his family, and their possessions.

<sup>8</sup>And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (the same is Zoar;) and they joined battle with them in the vale of Siddim; <sup>9</sup>with Chedorlaomer the king of Elam, and with Tidal king of nations, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar; four kings with five. <sup>10</sup>And the vale of Siddim *was full of slimepits*; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there; and they that remained fled to the mountain. <sup>11</sup>And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way. <sup>12</sup>And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

14:12  
Gen 11:27

14:13  
Gen 10:16; 13:18;  
39:14

14:14  
Gen 12:5  
Deut 34:1

<sup>13</sup>And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner; and these *were* confederate with Abram. <sup>14</sup>And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained *servants*, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued *them*

14:8 *vale*: valley. 14:10 *slimepits*: asphalt pits. 14:11 *victuals*: food. 14:13 *confederate*: allies.



LOT

Some people simply drift through life. Their choices, when they can muster the will to choose, tend to follow the course of least resistance. Lot was such a person.

While still young, Lot lost his father. Although this must have been hard on him, he was not left without strong role models in his grandfather Terah and his uncle Abram, who raised him. Still, Lot did not develop their sense of purpose. Throughout his life he was so caught up in the present moment that he seemed incapable of seeing the consequences of his actions. It is hard to imagine what his life would have been like without Abram's careful attention and God's intervention.

By the time Lot drifted out of the picture, his life had taken an ugly turn. He had so blended into the sinful culture of his day that he did not want to leave it. Then his daughters committed incest with him. His drifting finally took him in a very specific direction—destruction.

Lot, however, is called “just” and “righteous” in the New Testament (2 Peter 2:7, 8). Ruth, a descendant of Moab, was an ancestor of Jesus, even though Moab was born as a result of Lot's incestuous relationship with one of his daughters. Lot's story gives hope to us that God forgives and often brings about positive circumstances from evil.

What is the direction of your life? Are you headed toward God or away from him? If you're a drifter, the choice for God may seem difficult, but it is the one choice that puts all other choices in a different light.

**Strengths and accomplishments:**

- He was a successful businessman
- Peter calls him a just and righteous man (2 Peter 2:7, 8)

**Weaknesses and mistakes:**

- When faced with decisions, he tended to put off deciding, then chose the easiest course of action
- When given a choice, his first reaction was to think of himself

**Lesson from his life:**

- God wants us to do more than drift through life; he wants us to be an influence for him

**Vital statistics:**

- Where: Lived first in Ur of the Chaldeans (Chaldees), then moved to Canaan with Abram. Eventually he moved to the wicked city of Sodom
- Occupation: Wealthy sheep and cattle rancher; also a city official
- Relatives: Father: Haran. Adopted by Abram when his father died. The name of his wife, who turned into a pillar of salt, is not mentioned.

**Key verse:**

“And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city” (Genesis 19:16).

Lot's story is told in Genesis 11—14; 19. He is also mentioned in Deuteronomy 2:9; Luke 17:28–32; 2 Peter 2:7, 8.

**14:12** Lot's greedy desire for the best of everything led him into sinful surroundings. His burning desire for possessions and success cost him his freedom and enjoyment. As a captive to Chedorlaomer, he faced torture, slavery, or death. In much the same way, we can be enticed into doing things or going places we shouldn't. The prosperity we long for is captivating; it can both entice us and enslave us if our motives are not in line with God's desires.

**14:14–16** These incidents portray two of Abram's characteristics: (1) He had courage that came from God. Facing a powerful foe, he attacked. (2) He was prepared. He had taken time to train

his men for a potential conflict. We never know when we will be called upon to complete difficult tasks. Like Abram, we should prepare for those times and take courage from God when they come.

**14:14–16** When Abram learned that Lot was a prisoner, he immediately tried to help his nephew. It would have been easier and safer not to become involved. But with Lot in serious trouble, Abram acted at once. Sometimes we must get involved in a messy or painful situation in order to help others. We should be willing to act immediately when others need our help.

unto Dan. <sup>15</sup>And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus. <sup>16</sup>And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.

14:15  
Gen 15:2

<sup>17</sup>And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale.

14:17  
2 Sam 18:18

<sup>18</sup>And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. <sup>19</sup>And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: <sup>20</sup>and blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

14:18  
Pss 76:2; 110:4  
Heb 5:6, 10; 7:1

<sup>21</sup>And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.

14:19  
Gen 27:25; 48:9  
Mark 10:16

<sup>22</sup>And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, <sup>23</sup>that I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich: <sup>24</sup>save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.

14:20  
Gen 9:26; 24:27  
Heb 7:1-2

14:22  
Gen 1:1

14:23  
2 Kgs 5:16

14:24  
Gen 14:13

### 3. God promises a son to Abraham

**15** After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.

15:1  
Gen 21:17; 26:24  
Num 12:6  
Deut 33:29  
Ps 3:3

<sup>2</sup>And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? <sup>3</sup>And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.

<sup>4</sup>And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. <sup>5</sup>And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

15:4  
Gal 4:28

15:5  
Gen 12:2; 22:17;  
32:13

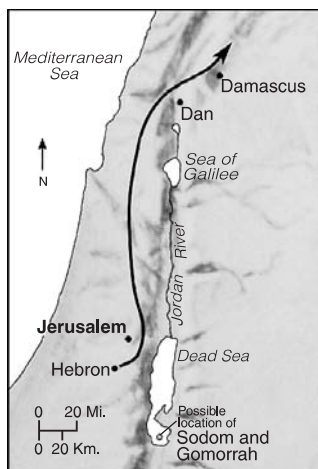
15:5  
Rom 4:18

14:15 himself: his forces. smote: attacked. 14:17 dale: valley. 14:23 shoelatchet: shoelace. 15:2 steward: heir. 15:4 bowels: body.

**14:18** Who was Melchizedek? He was obviously a God-fearing man, for his name means "king of righteousness" and "king of peace." He was a "priest of the most high God" (Hebrews 7:1, 2). He recognized God as creator of heaven and earth. What else is known about him? Four main themes have been suggested: (1) Melchizedek was a respected king of that region. Abram was simply showing him the respect he deserved. (2) The name Melchizedek may have been a standing title for all the kings of Salem. (3) Melchizedek was a "type" of Christ (Hebrews 7:3). A type is an Old Testament event or teaching that is so closely

#### LOT'S RESCUE

Having conquered Sodom, Chedorlaomer left for his home country, taking many captives with him. Abram learned what had happened and chased Chedorlaomer past Dan and beyond Damascus. There he defeated the king and rescued the captives, among them Lot.



related to what Christ did that it illustrates a lesson about Christ. (4) Melchizedek was the appearance on earth of the preincarnate Christ in a temporary bodily form.

**14:20ff** Abram gave one-tenth of the booty to Melchizedek. Even in some pagan religions, it was traditional to give a tenth of one's earnings to the gods. Abram followed accepted tradition; however, he refused to take any booty from the king of Sodom. Even though this huge amount would significantly increase what he could have given to God, he chose to reject it for more important reasons—he didn't want the ungodly king of Sodom to say, "I have made Abram rich." Instead, Abram wanted him to say, "God has made Abram rich." In this case, accepting the gifts would have focused everyone's attention on Abram or the king of Sodom rather than on God, the giver of victory. When people look at us, they need to see what God has accomplished in our lives.

**15:1** Why would Abram be afraid? Perhaps he feared revenge from the kings he had just defeated (14:15). God gave him two good reasons for courage: (1) He promised to defend Abram ("I am thy shield"), and (2) he promised to be Abram's "exceeding great reward." When you fear what lies ahead, remember that God will stay with you through difficult times and that he has promised you great blessings.

**15:2, 3** Eliezer was Abram's most trusted servant, acting as household administrator ("steward," see also Genesis 24). According to custom, if Abram were to die without a son, his eldest servant would become his heir. Although Abram loved his servant, he wanted a son to carry on the family line.

**15:5** Abram wasn't promised wealth or fame; he already had that. Instead God promised descendants like the stars or the grains of sand by the sea (22:17), too numerous to count. To appreciate the vast number of stars scattered through the sky, you need to be, like Abram, away from any interfering lights

15:6  
Ps 106:31  
<sup>†</sup>Rom 4:3, 9, 22  
<sup>†</sup>Gal 3:6

15:7  
Gen 12:1; 13:17

15:8  
Luke 1:18

15:9  
Lev 1:14

15:10  
Lev 1:17

15:13  
Exod 12:40  
<sup>†</sup>Acts 7:6  
Gal 3:17

<sup>6</sup>And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

<sup>7</sup>And he said unto him, I *am* the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.

<sup>8</sup>And he said, Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?

<sup>9</sup>And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon. <sup>10</sup>And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not. <sup>11</sup>And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

<sup>12</sup>And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him. <sup>13</sup>And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall

15:13 of a surety: surely.



## MELCHIZEDEK

Do you like a good mystery? History is full of them! They usually involve people. One of the most mysterious people in the Bible is the King of Peace, Melchizedek. He appeared one day in the life of Abraham (then Abram) and was never heard from again. What happened that day, however, was to be remembered throughout history and eventually became a subject of a New Testament letter (Hebrews).

This meeting between Abram and Melchizedek was most unusual. Although the two men were strangers and foreigners to each other, they shared a most important characteristic: Both worshiped and served the one God who made heaven and earth. This was a great moment of triumph for Abram. He had just defeated an army and regained the freedom of a large group of captives. If there was any doubt in his mind about whose victory it was, Melchizedek set the record straight by reminding Abram, “Blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand” (Genesis 14:20). Abram recognized that this man worshiped the same God he did.

Melchizedek was one of a small group of God-honoring people throughout the Old Testament who came in contact with the Jews (Israelites) but were not Jews themselves. This indicates that the requirement to be a follower of God is not genetic, but is based on faithfully obeying his teachings and recognizing his greatness.

Do you let God speak to you through other people? In evaluating others, do you consider God’s impact on their lives? Are you aware of the similarities between yourself and others who worship God, even if their form of worship is quite different from yours? Do you know the God of the Bible well enough to know if you truly worship him? Allow Melchizedek, Abraham, David, and Jesus, along with many other persons in the Bible to show you this great God, creator of heaven and earth. He wants you to know how much he loves you; he wants you to know him personally.

### Strengths and accomplishments:

- The first priest/king of Scripture—a leader with a heart tuned to God
- Good at encouraging others to serve God wholeheartedly
- A man whose character reflected his love for God
- A person in the Old Testament who reminds us of Jesus and who some believe really was the pre-incarnate Jesus

### Lesson from his life:

- Live for God and you’re likely to be at the right place at the right time. Examine your heart: To whom or what is your greatest loyalty? If you can honestly answer *God*, you are living for him

### Vital statistics:

- Where: Ruled in Salem, site of the future Jerusalem
- Occupation: King of Salem and priest of the most high God

### Key verses:

“For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; . . . Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils” (Hebrews 7:1, 4).

Melchizedek’s story is told in Genesis 14:17–20. He is also mentioned in Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 5–7.

or buildings. Or pick up a handful of sand and try to count the grains—it can’t be done! Just when Abram was despairing of ever having an heir, God promised descendants too numerous to imagine. God’s blessings are beyond our imaginations!

**15:6** Although Abram had been demonstrating his faith through his actions, it was his belief in the Lord, not his actions, that made Abram right with God (Romans 4:1–5). We too can have a right relationship with God by trusting him with our lives. Our outward actions—church attendance, prayer, good deeds—will not by themselves make us right with God. A right relationship is based

on faith—the heartfelt inner confidence that God is who he says he is and does what he says he will do. Right actions follow naturally as by-products.

**15:6** We have read of Abram’s mistakes, and we know he was only human. How could God call him righteous? Although human and sinful, Abram believed God. It was faith, not perfection, that made him right in God’s eyes. This principle holds for us: When we believe in God, he declares us righteous.

**15:13, 14** The book of Exodus tells the story of the enslavement and miraculous deliverance of Abram’s descendants.



be a stranger in a land *that is* not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; <sup>14</sup>and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. <sup>15</sup>And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. <sup>16</sup>But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.

<sup>17</sup>And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. <sup>18</sup>In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: <sup>19</sup>the Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, <sup>20</sup>and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, <sup>21</sup>and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.

**15:14**  
Exod 6:5  
**15:15**  
Gen 25:8  
**15:16**  
Exod 12:40  
**15:17**  
Jer 34:18-19  
**15:18**  
Num 34:1-15  
Deut 1:7-8  
**15:19**  
Num 24:21  
**15:21**  
Gen 10:15-16

*Abraham's second wife*

**16** Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name *was* Hagar. <sup>2</sup>And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. <sup>3</sup>And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. <sup>4</sup>And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.

**16:1**  
Gen 11:30  
Gal 4:24-25  
**16:2**  
Gen 30:3  
**16:3**  
Gen 12:4-5  
**16:4**  
Gen 16:15  
**16:5**  
Gen 31:53

<sup>5</sup>And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong *be* upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee.

<sup>6</sup>But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid *is* in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face.

<sup>7</sup>And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur. <sup>8</sup>And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go?

**16:7**  
Gen 21:17; 22:11, 15  
**16:8**  
Gen 3:9; 4:9  
**16:9**  
Gen 21:12  
Eph 6:5  
**16:10**  
Gen 17:20  
**16:11**  
Gen 16:15  
Exod 3:7-8  
**16:12**  
Job 39:5-8

And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai.

<sup>9</sup>And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands. <sup>10</sup>And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. <sup>11</sup>And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou *art* with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction. <sup>12</sup>And he will be a wild man; his hand *will be* against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.

**15:14** *substance*: possessions. **15:16** *hither*: here. **16:2** *hearkened*: listened.

**15:16** The Amorites were one of the nations living in Canaan, the land God promised Abram. God knew the people would grow more wicked and would someday need to be punished. Part of that punishment would involve taking away their land and giving it to Abram's descendants. God in his mercy was giving the Amorites plenty of time to repent, but he already knew they would not. At the right time, they would have to be punished. Everything God does is true to his character. He is merciful, knows all and acts justly—and his timing is perfect.

**15:17** Why did God send this strange vision to Abram? God's covenant with Abram was serious business. It represented an incredible promise from God and a huge responsibility for Abram. To confirm his promise, God gave Abram a sign—the smoking furnace and burning lamp. God took the initiative, gave the confirmation, and followed through on his promises. The sign to Abram was a visible assurance to him that the covenant God had made was real.

**16:1-3** Sarai gave Hagar to Abram as a substitute wife, a common practice at that time. A married woman who could not have children was shamed by her peers and was often required to give a female servant to her husband in order to produce heirs. The children born to the servant woman were considered the children of the wife. Abram was acting in line with the custom

of the day, but his action showed a lack of faith that God would fulfill his promise.

**16:3** Sarai took matters into her own hands by giving Hagar to Abram. Like Abram, she had trouble believing God's promise, which was apparently directed specifically toward Abram and Sarai. Out of this lack of faith came a series of problems. This invariably happens when we take over for God, trying to make a promise of his come true through efforts that are not in line with his specific directions. In this case, time was the greatest test of Abram and Sarai's willingness to let God work in their lives. Sometimes we too must simply wait. When we ask God for something and have to wait, we can be tempted to take matters into our own hands and interfere with God's plans.

**16:5** Although Sarai arranged for Hagar to have a child by Abram, she later blamed Abram for the results. It is often easier to strike out in frustration and point the finger at someone else than to admit an error and ask forgiveness. (Adam and Eve did the same thing in 3:12, 13.)

**16:6** Sarai took out her anger against Abram and herself on Hagar, and her treatment was harsh enough to cause Hagar to run away. Anger, especially when it arises from our own shortcomings, can be dangerous.

**16:8** Hagar was running away from her mistress and her problem. The angel of the Lord gave her this advice: (1) to return

16:13  
Gen 32:30

16:14  
Gen 14:7

16:15  
Gen 21:9; 25:12

16:16  
Gen 12:4; 16:3

<sup>13</sup>And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me? <sup>14</sup>Wherefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered.

<sup>15</sup>And Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called his son's name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael. <sup>16</sup>And Abram was fourscore and six years old, when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram.

16:13 looked after: seen.



## ISHMAEL

Have you ever wondered if you were born into the wrong family? We don't know much about how Ishmael viewed life, but that question must have haunted him at times. His life, his name, and his position were bound up in a conflict between two jealous women. Sarah, impatient with God's timetable, had taken matters into her own hands, deciding to have a child through another woman. Hagar, servant that she was, submitted to being used this way. But her pregnancy gave birth to strong feelings of superiority toward Sarah. Into this tense atmosphere, Ishmael was born.

For 13 years Abraham thought Ishmael's birth had fulfilled God's promise. He was surprised to hear God say that the promised child would be Abraham and Sarah's very own. Sarah's pregnancy and Isaac's birth must have had a devastating impact on Ishmael. Until then he had been treated as a son and heir but this late arrival made his future uncertain. During Isaac's weaning celebration, Sarah caught Ishmael teasing his half brother. As a result, Hagar and Ishmael were permanently expelled from Abraham's family.

Much of what happened throughout his life cannot be blamed on Ishmael. He was caught in a process much bigger than himself. However, his own actions showed that he had chosen to become part of the problem and not part of the solution. He chose to live under his circumstances rather than above them.

The choice he made is one we must all make. There are circumstances over which we have no control (heredity, for instance), but there are others that we can control (decisions we make). At the heart of the matter is the sin-oriented nature we have all inherited. It can be partly controlled, although not overcome, by human effort. In the context of history, Ishmael's life represents the mess we make when we don't try to change the things we could change. The God of the Bible has offered a solution. His answer is not control but a changed life. To have a changed life, turn to God, trust him to forgive your sinful past, and begin to change your attitude toward him and others.

### Strengths and accomplishments:

- One of the first to experience the physical sign of God's covenant, circumcision
- Known for his ability as an archer and hunter
- Fathered 12 sons who became leaders of warrior tribes

### Weakness and mistake:

- Failed to recognize the place of his half brother, Isaac, and mocked him

### Lesson from his life:

- God's plans incorporate people's mistakes

### Vital statistics:

- Where: Canaan and Egypt
- Occupation: Hunter, archer, warrior
- Relatives: Parents: Hagar and Abraham. Half brother: Isaac.

### Key verses:

"And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation" (Genesis 21:17, 18).

Ishmael's story is told in Genesis 16—17; 21:8—20; 25:12—18; 28:8, 9; 36:1—3. He is also mentioned in 1 Chronicles 1:28—31; Romans 9:7—9; Galatians 4:21—31.

and face Sarai, the cause of her problem, and (2) to act as she should. Hagar needed to work on her attitude toward Sarai, no matter how justified it may have been. Running away from problems rarely solves them. It is wise to return to our problems, face them squarely, accept God's promise to help, correct our attitudes, and act as we should.

**16:13** We have watched three people make serious mistakes: (1) Sarai, who took matters into her own hands and gave her servant girl to Abram; (2) Abram, who went along with the plan but, when things began to go wrong, refused to help solve the problem; and (3) Hagar, who ran away from her problem. In spite of this messy situation, God demonstrated his

ability to work all things together for good (Romans 8:28). Sarai and Abram still received the son they so desperately wanted, and God solved Hagar's problem despite Abram's refusal to get involved. No problem is too complicated for God if you are willing to let him help you.



*The terms of the promise*

**17** And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I *am* the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. <sup>2</sup>And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. <sup>3</sup>And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, <sup>4</sup>As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. <sup>5</sup>Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. <sup>6</sup>And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. <sup>7</sup>And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. <sup>8</sup>And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

<sup>9</sup>And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. <sup>10</sup>This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. <sup>11</sup>And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. <sup>12</sup>And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. <sup>13</sup>He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. <sup>14</sup>And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.

<sup>15</sup>And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah *shall* her name be. <sup>16</sup>And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a *mother* of nations; kings of people shall be of her.

<sup>17</sup>Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall *a child* be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?

<sup>18</sup>And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!

<sup>19</sup>And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, *and* with his seed after him. <sup>20</sup>And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. <sup>21</sup>But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year. <sup>22</sup>And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.

17:11 *betwixt*: between. 17:22 *left off*: ceased.

17:1  
Gen 12:7; 28:3;  
35:11; 48:3  
Deut 18:13  
Matt 5:48

17:2  
Gen 12:2; 15:18

17:3  
Gen 17:17; 18:2

17:5  
Neh 9:7  
<sup>1</sup>Rom 4:17

17:6  
Gen 35:11

17:7  
Gen 15:18  
Lev 11:45; 26:12  
Ps 105:8-11  
<sup>1</sup>Gal 3:16

17:9  
Exod 19:5

17:10  
John 7:22  
Acts 7:8

17:11  
Exod 12:48  
Deut 10:16  
Josh 5:2

17:12  
Gen 21:4  
Lev 12:3  
Luke 1:59; 2:21

17:14  
Exod 30:33  
Lev 7:20

17:15  
Gen 17:5

17:16  
Gen 18:10

17:17  
Gen 17:3; 18:11-13

17:19  
Gen 21:2; 26:2-5

17:20  
Gen 25:12-16

17:21  
Gen 18:10, 14

17:22  
Gen 18:33; 35:13

**17:1** The Lord told Abram, "I am the Almighty God; walk before me." He has the same message for us today. We are to obey because he is God—that is reason enough. If you don't think the benefits are worth it, consider who God is—the only one with the power and ability to meet your every need.

**17:2-8** Why did God repeat his covenant to Abram? Twice before, he had mentioned this agreement (Genesis 12 and 15). Here, however, God was bringing it into focus and preparing to carry it out. He now revealed to Abram several specific parts of his covenant: (1) God would give Abram many descendants; (2) many nations would descend from him; (3) God would maintain his covenant with Abram's descendants; (4) God would give Abram's descendants the land of Canaan.

**17:5** In the Bible, people's names were very important—a name described a person's character or experience. Therefore, shortly before the promised son was conceived, God changed Abram's name (which meant "exalted father") to Abraham (which meant the "father of a great multitude"). From this point on, the Bible always calls him Abraham.

**17:5-14** God was making a covenant, or contract, between himself and Abraham. The terms were simple: Abraham would obey God and circumcise all the males in his household. God's part was to give Abraham heirs, property, power, and wealth. Most contracts are even trades: We give something and in turn receive something of equal value. But when we become part of

God's covenant family, the blessings we receive far outweigh what we must give up.

**17:9, 10** Why did God require circumcision? (1) As a sign of obedience to him in all matters. (2) As a sign of belonging to his covenant people. Once circumcised, the man would be identified as one of God's chosen people (eventually the Jews) forever. (3) As a symbol of "cutting off" the old life of sin, purifying one's heart, and dedicating oneself to God. (4) Possibly as a health measure.

Circumcision more than any other practice separated God's people from their heathen neighbors. In Abraham's day, this was essential to develop the pure worship of the one true God.

**17:17-27** How could Abraham doubt God? It seemed incredible that he and Sarai in their advanced years could have a child. Abraham, the man God considered righteous because of his faith, had trouble believing God's promise to him. Despite his doubts, however, Abraham followed God's commands (17:22-27). Even those of great faith may have doubts. When God seems to want the impossible and you begin to doubt his leading, be like Abraham. Focus on God's commitment to fulfill his promises to you, and then continue to obey.

**17:20** God did not forget Ishmael. Although he was not to be Abraham's heir, he would also be the father of a great nation. Regardless of your circumstances, God has not forgotten you. Obey him and trust in his plan.

17:23  
Gen 14:14

17:24  
Rom 4:11

17:25  
Gen 16:16

<sup>23</sup>And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day, as God had said unto him. <sup>24</sup>And Abraham *was* ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. <sup>25</sup>And Ishmael his son *was* thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. <sup>26</sup>In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son. <sup>27</sup>And all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him.

#### 4. Sodom and Gomorrah

*Three angels visit Abraham*

18:1  
Gen 12:7; 13:18

18:2  
Gen 32:24  
Josh 5:13  
Judg 13:6-11

**18** And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day;<sup>2</sup> and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw *them*, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself  
17:23 *selfsame*: very same.



ABRAHAM

We all know that there are consequences to any action we take. What we do can set into motion a series of events that may continue long after we're gone. Unfortunately, when we are making a decision most of us think only of the immediate consequences. These are often misleading because they are short-lived.

Abraham had a choice to make. His decision was between setting out with his family and belongings for parts unknown or staying right where he was. He had to decide between the security of what he already had and the uncertainty of traveling under God's direction. All he had to go on was God's promise to guide and bless him. Abraham could hardly have been expected to visualize how much of the future was resting on his decision of whether to go or stay, but his obedience affected the history of the world. His decision to follow God set into motion the development of the nation that God would eventually use as his own when he visited earth himself. When Jesus Christ came to earth, God's promise was fulfilled; through Abraham the entire world was blessed.

You probably don't know the long-term effects of most decisions you make. But shouldn't the fact that there will be long-term results cause you to think carefully and seek God's guidance as you make choices and take action today?

#### Strengths and accomplishments:

- His faith pleased God
- Became the founder of the Jewish nation
- Was respected by others and courageous in defending his family at any cost
- Was not only a caring father to his own family, but practiced hospitality to others
- Was a successful and wealthy rancher
- Usually avoided conflicts, but when they were unavoidable, he allowed his opponent to set the rules for settling the dispute

#### Weakness and mistake:

- Under direct pressure, he distorted the truth

#### Lessons from his life:

- God desires dependence, trust, and faith in him—not faith in our ability to please him
- God's plan from the beginning has been to make himself known to all people

#### Vital statistics:

- Where: Born in Ur of the Chaldeans (Chaldees); spent most of his life in the land of Canaan
- Occupation: Wealthy livestock owner
- Relatives: Brothers: Nahor and Haran. Father: Terah. Wife: Sarah. Nephew: Lot. Sons: Ishmael and Isaac.
- Contemporaries: Abimelech, Melchizedek

#### Key verse:

"And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness" (Genesis 15:6).

Abraham's story is told in Genesis 11—25. He is also mentioned in Exodus 2:24; Acts 7:2–8; Romans 4; Galatians 3; Hebrews 2; 6—7; 11.

**18:2–5** Abraham was eager to show hospitality to these men, as was Lot (19:2). In Abraham's day, a person's reputation was largely connected to his hospitality—the sharing of home and food. Even strangers were to be treated as highly honored guests. Meeting another's need for food or shelter was and still is one of

the most immediate and practical ways to obey God. It is also a time-honored relationship builder. Hebrews 13:2 suggests that we, like Abraham, might actually entertain angels. This thought should be on our minds the next time we have the opportunity to meet a stranger's needs.

toward the ground, <sup>3</sup>and said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: <sup>4</sup>let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: <sup>5</sup>and I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant.

And they said, So do, as thou hast said.

<sup>6</sup>And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead *it*, and make cakes upon the hearth. <sup>7</sup>And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave *it* unto a young man; and he hastened to dress it. <sup>8</sup>And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set *it* before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.

<sup>9</sup>And they said unto him, Where *is* Sarah thy wife?

And he said, Behold, in the tent.

<sup>10</sup>And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard *it* in the tent door, which *was* behind him. <sup>11</sup>Now Abraham and Sarah *were* old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. <sup>12</sup>Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?

<sup>13</sup>And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? <sup>14</sup>Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.

<sup>15</sup>Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid.

And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.

<sup>16</sup>And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way. <sup>17</sup>And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; <sup>18</sup>seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? <sup>19</sup>For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

*Abraham prays for Sodom*

<sup>20</sup>And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; <sup>21</sup>I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know.

<sup>22</sup>And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD. <sup>23</sup>And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? <sup>24</sup>Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that *are* therein? <sup>25</sup>That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

**18:3** *pass not away*: do not pass by. **18:12** *waxed*: grown. *lord*: husband. **18:13** *of a surety*: surely. **18:19** *justice and judgment*: righteousness and justice. **18:24** *peradventure*: suppose.

**18:4**  
Gen 19:2; 24:32  
**18:5**  
Judg 6:18-19;  
13:15-16

**18:10**  
<sup>1</sup>Rom 9:9  
**18:11**  
Gen 17:17  
**18:12**  
1 Pet 3:6

**18:14**  
Gen 18:10  
Jer 32:17, 27  
<sup>1</sup>Rom 9:9

**18:16**  
Gen 18:22; 19:1

**18:17**  
Gen 19:24

**18:18**  
Gen 12:2-3  
<sup>1</sup>Gal 3:18

**18:19**  
Neh 9:7

**18:20**  
Gen 19:13

**18:21**  
Gen 11:5  
Exod 3:8

**18:22**  
Gen 18:16; 19:1

**18:23**  
Exod 23:7

**18:25**  
Deut 1:16-17; 32:4  
Ps 58:11

**18:14** “Is any thing too hard for the LORD?” The obvious answer is, “Of course not!” This question reveals much about God. Make it a habit to insert your specific needs into the question. “Is this day in my life too hard for the Lord?” “Is this habit I’m trying to break too hard for him?” “Is this communication problem I’m having too hard for him?” Asking the question this way reminds you that God is personally involved in your life and nudges you to ask for his power to help you.

**18:15** Sarah lied because she was afraid of being discovered. Fear is the most common motive for lying. We are afraid that our inner thoughts and emotions will be exposed or our wrongdoing discovered. But lying causes greater complications than telling the truth and brings even more problems. You will be far better off telling the truth right from the start.

**18:20-33** Did Abraham change God’s mind? Of course not. The more likely answer is that God changed Abraham’s mind. Abraham knew that God is just and that he punishes sin. But he may have wondered about God’s mercy. Abraham seemed to be probing God’s mind to see how merciful he really was. He left his conversation with God convinced that God was both kind and fair.

Our prayers may not change God’s mind, but they may change ours just as Abraham’s prayer changed his. Prayer is a means through which we can better comprehend the mind of God.

**18:20-33** Why did God let Abraham question his justice and intercede for a wicked city? Abraham knew God must punish sin, but he also knew from experience that God is merciful to sinners. God knew there were not 10 righteous people in the city, but he was merciful enough to allow Abraham to intercede. He was also merciful enough to help Lot, Abraham’s nephew, get out of Sodom before it was destroyed. God does not take pleasure in destroying the wicked, but he must punish sin. He is both just and merciful. We should be thankful that God’s mercy extends to us.

**18:21** God gave the men of Sodom a fair test. He was not ignorant of the city’s wicked practices, but in his fairness and patience he gave the people of Sodom one last chance to turn to him. God is still waiting, giving people the opportunity to turn to him (2 Peter 3:9). Those who are wise will turn to him before his patience wears out.

**18:25** Was God being unfair to the people of Sodom? Did he really plan to destroy the good with the wicked? On the contrary,

18:27  
Gen 2:7  
Job 30:19; 42:6

<sup>26</sup>And the LORD said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.

<sup>27</sup>And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which *am but* dust and ashes: <sup>28</sup>peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for *lack of five*?

And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy *it*.

<sup>29</sup>And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there.

And he said, I will not do *it* for forty's sake.

<sup>30</sup>And he said *unto him*, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there.

And he said, I will not do *it*, if I find thirty there.

<sup>31</sup>And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there.

And he said, I will not destroy *it* for twenty's sake.

18:30  
Exod 32:32



SARAH

There probably isn't anything harder to do than wait, whether we are expecting something good, something bad, or an unknown.

One way we often cope with a long wait (or even a short one) is to begin helping God get his plan into action. Sarah tried this approach. She was too old to expect to have a child of her own, so she thought God must have something else in mind. From Sarah's limited point of view this could only be to give Abraham a son through another woman—a common practice in her day. The plan seemed harmless enough. Abraham would sleep with Sarah's servant girl, who would then give birth to a child. Sarah would take the child as her own. The plan worked beautifully—at first. But as you read about the events that followed, you will be struck by how often Sarah must have regretted the day she decided to push God's timetable ahead.

Another way we cope with a long wait is to gradually conclude that what we're waiting for is never going to happen. Sarah waited 90 years for a baby! When God told her she would finally have one of her own, she laughed, not so much from a lack of faith in what God could do but from doubt about what he could do *through her*. When confronted about her laughter, she lied—as she had seen her husband do from time to time. She probably didn't want her true feelings to be known.

What parts of your life seem to be “on hold” right now? Do you understand that this may be part of God's plan for you? The Bible has more than enough clear direction to keep us busy while we're waiting for some particular part of life to move ahead.

**Strengths and accomplishments:**

- Was intensely loyal to her own child
- Became the mother of a nation and an ancestor of Jesus
- Was a woman of faith, the first woman listed in the Hall of Faith in Hebrews 11

**Weaknesses and mistakes:**

- Had trouble believing God's promises to her
- Attempted to work problems out on her own, without consulting God
- Tried to cover her faults by blaming others

**Lessons from her life:**

- God responds to faith even in the midst of failure
- God is not bound by what usually happens; he can stretch the limits and cause unheard-of events to occur

**Vital statistics:**

- Where: Married Abram in Ur of the Chaldeans (Chaldees), then moved with him to Canaan
- Occupation: Wife, mother, household manager
- Relatives: Father: Terah. Husband: Abraham. Brothers: Nahor and Haran. Nephew: Lot. Son: Isaac.

**Key verse:**

“Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised” (Hebrews 11:11).

Sarah's story is told in Genesis 11—25. She is also mentioned in Isaiah 51:2; Romans 4:19; 9:9; Hebrews 11:11; 1 Peter 3:6.

God's fairness stood out. (1) He agreed to spare the entire city if only 10 godly people lived there. (2) He showed great mercy toward Lot, apparently the only man in the city who had any kind of relationship with him (and even that was questionable). (3) He showed great patience toward Lot almost forcing him to leave

Sodom before it was destroyed. Remember God's patience when you are tempted to think he is unfair. Even the most godly people deserve his justice. We should be glad God doesn't direct his justice toward us as he did toward Sodom.

<sup>32</sup>And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there.

And he said, I will not destroy *it* for ten's sake.

<sup>33</sup>And the LORD went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place.

**18:33**  
Gen 17:22; 35:13

*God rescues Lot*

**19** And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing *them* rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground;<sup>2</sup> and he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways.

**19:1**  
Gen 18:2

**19:2**  
Gen 18:4

And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night.

**19:3**  
Gen 18:6-8

<sup>3</sup>And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.

**19:4**  
Gen 13:13; 18:20

<sup>4</sup>But before they lay down, the men of the city, *even* the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: <sup>5</sup>and they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where *are* the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them.

**19:5**  
Lev 18:22  
Judg 19:22

<sup>6</sup>And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him, <sup>7</sup>and said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly. <sup>8</sup>Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as *is* good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof.

**19:8**  
Deut 23:17

<sup>9</sup>And they said, Stand back. And they said *again*, This one *fellow* came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, *even* Lot, and came near to break the door. <sup>10</sup>But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door. <sup>11</sup>And they smote the men that *were* at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door.

**19:9**  
Exod 2:14

**19:10**  
Gen 19:1

**19:11**  
Deut 28:28-29  
2 Kgs 6:18  
Acts 13:11

<sup>12</sup>And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring *them* out of this place: <sup>13</sup>for we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it.

**19:13**  
Gen 18:20  
1 Chr 21:15  
Jude 1:7

<sup>14</sup>And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.

**19:14**  
Exod 9:21  
Jer 5:12;  
43:1-2

**18:33** *left communing*: finished speaking. **19:2** *tarry*: stay. **19:4** *compassed*: surrounded. **19:5** *know*: have sex with. **19:9** *sojourn*: live among us. *sore*: hard. **19:11** *smote*: struck. **19:13** *waxen*: grown.

**18:33** God showed Abraham that asking for anything is allowed, with the understanding that God's answers come from God's perspective. They are not always in harmony with our expectations, for only he knows the whole story. Are you missing God's answer to a prayer because you haven't considered any possible answers other than the one you expect?

**19:1** The city gate was the meeting place for city officials and other men to discuss current events and transact business. It was a place of authority and status where one could see and be seen. Evidently Lot held an important position in the government or associated with those who did, for the angels found him at the city gate. Perhaps Lot's status in Sodom was one reason he was so reluctant to leave (19:16, 18-22).

**19:5** The phrase "that we may know them" means the men wanted to have sexual relations with Lot's guests.

**19:8** How could any father give his daughters to be ravished by a mob of perverts, just to protect two strangers? Possibly Lot was scheming to save both the girls and the visitors, hoping the girls' fiancés would rescue them or that the homosexual men would be uninterested in the girls and simply go away. Although it was the custom of the day to protect guests at any cost, this terrible suggestion reveals how deeply sin had been

absorbed into Lot's life. He had become hardened to evil acts in an evil city. Whatever Lot's motives were, we see here an illustration of Sodom's terrible wickedness—a wickedness so great that God had to destroy the entire city.

**19:13** God promised to spare Sodom if only 10 godly people lived there (18:32). Obviously not even 10 could be found, for the angels arrived to destroy the city. Archaeological evidence points to an advanced civilization in this area during Abraham's day. Most researchers also confirm some kind of sudden and devastating destruction. It is now widely thought that the buried city lies beneath the waters of the southern end of the Dead Sea. The story of Sodom reveals that the people of Lot's day had to deal with the same kinds of repulsive sins the world faces today.

**19:14** Lot had lived so long and so contented among ungodly people that he was no longer a believable witness for God. He had allowed his environment to shape him, rather than shaping his environment. Do those who know you see you as a witness for God, or are you just one of the crowd blending in unnoticed? Lot had compromised to the point that he was almost useless to God. When he finally made a stand, nobody listened. Have you too become useless to God because you are too much like your environment? To make a difference, you must first decide to be different in your faith and in your conduct.



<sup>15</sup>And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. <sup>16</sup>And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. <sup>17</sup>And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.

19:17  
Gen 13:10; 19:26  
Jer 48:6

<sup>18</sup>And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord: <sup>19</sup>behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die: <sup>20</sup>behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live.

19:22  
Gen 13:10

19:24  
Luke 17:29  
Jude 1:7

19:25  
Deut 29:23  
Isa 13:19  
Lam 4:6  
2 Pet 2:6

19:26  
Gen 19:17  
Luke 17:32

19:27  
Gen 18:22

19:28  
Rev 9:2

19:29  
Deut 7:8; 9:5  
2 Pet 2:7-8

<sup>21</sup>And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken. <sup>22</sup>Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

<sup>23</sup>The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. <sup>24</sup>Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; <sup>25</sup>and he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. <sup>26</sup>But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

<sup>27</sup>And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD: <sup>28</sup>and he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace. <sup>29</sup>And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt.

#### *The sin of Lot's daughters*

<sup>30</sup>And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters. <sup>31</sup>And the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father is old, and *there is* not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth: <sup>32</sup>come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. <sup>33</sup>And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.

19:30  
Gen 13:10

19:33  
Gen 9:21

<sup>34</sup>And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, *and* lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. <sup>35</sup>And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.

**19:16** Lot hesitated, and the angel seized his hand and rushed him to safety. He did not want to abandon the wealth and comfort he enjoyed in Sodom. It is easy to criticize Lot for being hypnotized by Sodom when the choice seems so clear to us. To be wiser than Lot we must see that our hesitation to obey stems from the false attractions of our culture's pleasures.

**19:16, 29** Notice how God's mercy toward Abraham extended to Lot and his family. Because Abraham pleaded for Lot, God was merciful and saved Lot from the fiery death that engulfed Sodom. A righteous person can often affect others for good. James says that the prayers of a righteous person are powerful (see James 5:16). All Christians should follow Abraham's example and pray for others to be saved.

**19:24** In the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, we see two facets of God's character: his great patience (agreeing to spare a wicked city for 10 good people) and his fierce anger (destroying both cities). As we grow spiritually, we should find ourselves developing a deeper fear of God because of his anger toward sin, and also a deeper love for God because of his patience when we sin.

**19:26** Lot's wife turned back to look at the smoldering city of Sodom. Clinging to the comforts of the past, she was unwilling to turn completely from sin. Are you looking back longingly at sin

while trying to move forward with God? You can't make progress with God as long as you are holding on to pieces of your old life. Jesus said it this way in Matthew 6:24: "No man can serve two masters."

**19:30-38** In this pitiful sequel to the story of the destruction of Sodom, we see two women compelled to preserve their family line. They were driven not by lust but by desperation—they feared they would never marry. Lot's tendency to compromise and refusal to act reached its peak. He should have found right partners for his daughters long before this; Abraham's family wasn't far away. Now the two daughters stooped to incest, showing their acceptance of the morals of Sodom. When we are desperate for what we feel we must have, we are most likely to sin.

**19:30-38** Why doesn't the Bible openly condemn these sisters for what they did? In many cases, the Bible does not judge people by their actions. It simply reports the events. However, incest is clearly condemned in other parts of Scripture (Leviticus 18:6-18; 20:11, 12, 17, 19-21; Deuteronomy 22:30; 27:20-23; Ezekiel 22:11; 1 Corinthians 5:1). Perhaps the consequence of their action—Moab and Ammon became enemies of Israel—was God's way of judging their sin.

<sup>36</sup>Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father. <sup>37</sup>And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same *is* the father of the Moabites unto this day. <sup>38</sup>And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Ben-ammi: the same *is* the father of the children of Ammon unto this day.

*Abraham deceives the king*

**20** And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar. <sup>2</sup>And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She *is* my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah.

<sup>3</sup>But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou *art but* a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she *is* a man's wife.

<sup>4</sup>But Abimelech had not come near her: and he said, Lord, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation? <sup>5</sup>Said he not unto me, She *is* my sister? and she, even she herself said, He *is* my brother: in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this.

<sup>6</sup>And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her. <sup>7</sup>Now therefore restore the man *his* wife; for he *is* a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore *her* not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that *are* thine.

<sup>8</sup>Therefore Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these things in their ears: and the men were sore afraid. <sup>9</sup>Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said unto him, What hast thou done unto us? and what have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done. <sup>10</sup>And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing?

<sup>11</sup>And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the fear of God *is* not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife's sake. <sup>12</sup>And yet indeed *she is* my sister; she *is* the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife. <sup>13</sup>And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said unto her, This *is* thy kindness which thou shalt shew unto me; at every place whither we shall come, say of me, He *is* my brother.

<sup>14</sup>And Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and womenservants, and gave *them* unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife. <sup>15</sup>And Abimelech said, Behold, my land *is* before thee: dwell where it pleaseth thee. <sup>16</sup>And unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand *pieces* of silver: behold, he *is* to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that *are* with thee, and with all *other*: thus she was reprov'd.

<sup>17</sup>So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maid-servants; and they bare *children*. <sup>18</sup>For the LORD had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah Abraham's wife.

**20:1** sojourned: lived. **20:6** suffered: allowed. **20:8** sore: very.

**19:37**  
Gen 36:35  
Exod 15:15  
Num 21:29  
Deut 2:9  
Ruth 1:1

**19:38**  
Num 21:24  
Deut 2:19

**20:1**  
Gen 14:7; 18:1;  
26:1

**20:2**  
Gen 12:13

**20:3**  
Gen 28:12; 31:24;  
37:5

**20:4**  
Gen 18:23-25

**20:5**  
Gen 12:19  
1 Kgs 9:4  
Pss 7:8; 26:6

**20:7**  
1 Sam 7:5  
Job 42:8

**20:9**  
Gen 12:18

**20:11**  
Gen 12:12; 42:18

**20:13**  
Gen 12:1

**20:14**  
Gen 12:16

**20:16**  
Gen 23:15

**20:17**  
Num 12:13; 21:7

**20:18**  
Gen 12:17

**19:37, 38** Moab and Ben-ammi were the products of incest. They became the fathers of two of Israel's greatest enemies, the Moabites and the Ammonites. These nations settled east of the Jordan River, and Israel never conquered them. Because of the family connection, Moses was forbidden to attack them (Deuteronomy 2:9). Ruth, great-grandmother of David and an ancestor of Jesus, was from Moab.

**20:2** Abraham had used this same trick before to protect himself (12:11–13). Although Abraham is one of our heroes of faith, he did not learn his lesson well enough the first time. In fact, by giving in to the temptation again, he risked turning a sinful act into a sinful pattern of lying whenever he suspected his life was in danger.

No matter how much we love God, certain temptations are especially difficult to resist. These are the vulnerable spots in our spiritual armor. As we struggle with these weaknesses, we can be encouraged to know that God is watching out for us just as he did for Abraham.

**20:6** Abimelech had unknowingly taken a married woman to be his wife and was about to commit adultery. But God somehow prevented him from touching Sarah and held him back from sinning. What mercy on God's part! How many times has God

done the same for us, holding us back from sin in ways we can't even detect? We have no way of knowing—we just know from this story that he can. God works just as often in ways we can't see as in ways we can.

**20:11–13** Because Abraham mistakenly assumed that Abimelech was a wicked man, he made a quick decision to tell a half-truth. Abraham thought it would be more effective to deceive Abimelech than to trust God to work in the king's life. Don't assume that God will not work in a situation that has potential problems. You may not completely understand the situation, and God may intervene when you least expect it.

**20:17, 18** Why did God punish Abimelech when he had no idea Sarah was married? (1) Even though Abimelech's intentions were good, as long as Sarah was living in his harem he was in danger of sinning. A person who eats a poisonous toadstool, thinking it's a harmless mushroom, no doubt has perfectly good intentions—but will still suffer. Sin is a poison that damages us and those around us, whatever our intentions. (2) The punishment, closing up "all the wombs of the house of Abimelech," lasted only as long as Abimelech was in danger of sleeping with Sarah. It was meant to change the situation, not to harm Abimelech. (3) The punishment clearly showed that Abraham was in league with a powerful



21:1  
Gen 17:16, 21  
21:2  
Gal 4:22  
Heb 11:11  
21:3  
Gen 17:19  
21:4  
Gen 17:10, 12  
21:5  
Gen 12:4  
Heb 6:15  
21:6  
Isa 54:1

## 5. Birth and near sacrifice of Isaac

**21** And the LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken. <sup>2</sup>For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. <sup>3</sup>And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac. <sup>4</sup>And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, as God had commanded him. <sup>5</sup>And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him.

<sup>6</sup>And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, *so that* all that hear will laugh with me. <sup>7</sup>And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? for I have born *him* a son in his old age.



ISAAC

A name carries great authority. It sets you apart. It triggers memories. The sound of it calls you to attention anywhere.

Many Bible names accomplished even more. They were often descriptions of important facts about one's past and hopes for the future. The choice of the name *Isaac*, "laughter," for Abraham and Sarah's son must have created a variety of feelings in them each time it was spoken. At times it must have recalled their shocked laughter at God's announcement that they would be parents in their old age. At other times, it must have brought back the joyful feelings of receiving their long-awaited answer to prayer for a child. Most important, it was a testimony to God's power in making his promise a reality.

In a family of forceful initiators, Isaac was the quiet, "mind-my-own-business" type unless he was specifically called on to take action. He was the protected only child from the time Sarah got rid of Ishmael until Abraham arranged his marriage to Rebekah.

In his own family, Isaac had the patriarchal position, but Rebekah had the power. Rather than stand his ground, Isaac found it easier to compromise or lie to avoid confrontations.

In spite of these shortcomings, Isaac was part of God's plan. The model his father gave him included a great gift of faith in the one true God. God's promise to create a great nation through which he would bless the world was passed on by Isaac to his twin sons.

It is usually not hard to identify with Isaac in his weaknesses. But consider for a moment that God works through people in spite of their shortcomings and, often, through them. As you pray, put into words your desire to be available to God. You will discover that his willingness to use you is even greater than your desire to be used.

### Strengths and accomplishments:

- He was the miracle child born to Sarah and Abraham when she was 90 years old and he was 100
- He was the first descendant in fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham
- He seems to have been a caring and consistent husband, at least until his sons were born
- He demonstrated great patience

### Weaknesses and mistakes:

- Under pressure he tended to lie
- In conflict he sought to avoid confrontation
- He played favorites between his sons and alienated his wife

### Lessons from his life:

- Patience often brings rewards
- Both God's plans and his promises are larger than people
- God keeps his promises! He remains faithful though we are often faithless
- Playing favorites is sure to bring family conflict

### Vital statistics:

- Where: The area called the Negev, in the southern part of Palestine, between Kadesh and Shur (Genesis 20:1)
- Occupation: Wealthy livestock owner
- Relatives: Parents: Abraham and Sarah. Half brother: Ishmael. Wife: Rebekah. Sons: Jacob and Esau.

### Key verse:

"And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him" (Genesis 17:19).

Isaac's story is told in Genesis 17:15—35:29. He is also mentioned in Romans 9:7, 8; Hebrews 11:17—20; James 2:21.

God. This incident may have made Abimelech respect and fear Abraham's God.

**21:1–7** Who could believe Abraham would have a son at 100 years of age—and live to raise him to adulthood? But doing the impossible is everyday business for God. Our big problems may not seem so impossible if we let God handle them.

**21:7** After repeated promises, a visit by two angels, and the appearance of the Lord himself, Sarah finally cried out with surprise and joy at the birth of her son. Because of her doubt, worry, and fear, she had forfeited the peace she could have felt in God's wonderful promise to her. The way to bring peace to a troubled heart is to focus on God's promises. Trust him to do what he says.

*Hagar and Ishmael sent away*

<sup>8</sup>And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast the *same* day that Isaac was weaned. **21:8**  
1 Sam 1:23

<sup>9</sup>And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking. <sup>10</sup>Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, *even* with Isaac. <sup>11</sup>And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son. **21:9**  
Gal 4:29 **21:10**  
Gal 4:30

<sup>12</sup>And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called. <sup>13</sup>And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he *is* thy seed. **21:12**  
Rom 9:7  
Heb 11:18 **21:13**  
Gen 16:10; 21:18;  
25:12-18

<sup>14</sup>And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave *it* unto Hagar, putting *it* on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beer-sheba. <sup>15</sup>And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs. <sup>16</sup>And she went, and sat her down over against *him* a good way off, as it were a bowshot: for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against *him*, and lift up her voice, and wept. **21:14**  
Gen 16:1

<sup>17</sup>And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he *is*. <sup>18</sup>Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation. **21:16**  
Jer 6:26

<sup>19</sup>And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink. <sup>20</sup>And God was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. <sup>21</sup>And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt. **21:17**  
Exod 3:7  
Deut 26:7  
Ps 6:8 **21:18**  
Gen 26:24

<sup>22</sup>And it came to pass at that time, that Abimelech and Pichol the chief captain of his host spake unto Abraham, saying, God *is* with thee in all that thou doest: <sup>23</sup>now therefore swear unto me here by God that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son: *but* according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned. **21:20**  
Gen 28:15 **21:21**  
Gen 25:18

*A treaty by a well*

<sup>24</sup>And Abraham said, I will swear. <sup>25</sup>And Abraham reprov'd Abimelech because of a well of water, which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away. <sup>26</sup>And Abimelech said, I wot not who hath done this thing: neither didst thou tell me, neither yet heard I of *it*, but today. <sup>27</sup>And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech; and both of them made a covenant. <sup>28</sup>And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves. **21:22**  
Gen 26:26 **21:23**  
Gen 24:3

<sup>29</sup>And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What *mean* these seven ewe lambs which thou hast set by themselves? **21:25**  
Gen 26:15

<sup>30</sup>And he said, For *these* seven ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witness unto me, that I have digged this well. <sup>31</sup>Wherefore he called that place Beer-sheba; because there they sware both of them. **21:27**  
Gen 26:31

<sup>32</sup>Thus they made a covenant at Beer-sheba: then Abimelech rose up, and Pichol the chief captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines. <sup>33</sup>And *Abraham* planted a grove in Beer-sheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God. <sup>34</sup>And Abraham sojourned in the Philistines' land many days. **21:30**  
Gen 31:44 **21:31**  
Gen 21:14; 26:33

**21:33**  
1 Sam 22:6; 31:13  
Ps 90:2  
Isa 9:6; 40:28

**21:10** bondwoman: slave. **21:15** bottle: skin. cast: put. **21:16** over against: across. **21:23** sojourned: lived. **21:26** wot: know.

**21:18** What happened to Ishmael, and who were his descendants? Ishmael became ruler of a large tribe or nation. The Ishmaelites were nomads living in the wilderness of Sinai and

Paran, south of Israel. One of Ishmael's daughters married Esau, Ishmael's nephew (28:9). The Bible pictures the Ishmaelites as hostile to Israel and to God (Psalm 83:5, 6).

**21:31** Beer-sheba, the southernmost city of Israel, lay on the edge of a vast wilderness that stretched as far as Egypt to the southwest and Mount Sinai to the south. The phrase "from Dan even to Beer-sheba" was often used to describe the traditional boundaries of the Promised Land (2 Samuel 17:11). Beer-sheba's southern location and the presence of several wells in the area may explain why Abraham settled there. Beer-sheba was also the home of Isaac, Abraham's son.

### God tests Abraham's obedience

22:1  
Exod 15:25; 16:4  
Deut 8:2, 16

**22** And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham.

And he said, Behold, *here I am*.

22:2  
2 Chr 3:1  
John 3:16

<sup>2</sup>And he said, Take now thy son, thine only *son* Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

<sup>3</sup>And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. <sup>4</sup>Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. <sup>5</sup>And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.

22:1 *tempt*: test. 22:3 *clave*: split.



HAGAR

Escape of some kind is usually the most tempting solution to our problems. In fact, it can become a habit. Hagar was a person who used that approach. When the going got tough, she usually got going—in the other direction.

However, it is worthwhile to note that the biggest challenges Hagar faced were brought on by *other* people's choices. Sarah chose her to bear Abraham's child, and Hagar probably had little to say in the matter.

It isn't hard to understand how Hagar's pregnancy caused her to look down on Sarah. But that brought on hard feelings, and Sarah consequently punished Hagar. This motivated her first escape. When she returned to the family and gave birth to Ishmael, Sarah's continued barrenness must have contributed to bitterness on both sides.

When Isaac was finally born, Sarah looked for an excuse to have Hagar and Ishmael sent away. She found it when she caught Ishmael teasing Isaac. In the desert, out of water and facing the death of her son, Hagar once again tried to escape. She walked away so she wouldn't have to watch her son die. Once again, God graciously intervened.

Have you noticed how patiently God operates to make our escape attempts fail? Have you begun to learn that escape is only a temporary solution? God's continual desire is for us to face our problems with his help. We experience his help most clearly in and through conflicts and difficulties, not away from them. Are there problems in your life for which you've been using the "Hagar solution"? Choose one of those problems, ask for God's help, and begin to face it today.

#### Strength and accomplishment:

- Mother of Abraham's first child, Ishmael, who became founder of the Arab nations

#### Weaknesses and mistakes:

- When faced with problems, she tended to run away
- Her pregnancy brought out strong feelings of pride and arrogance

#### Lessons from her life:

- God is faithful to his plan and promises, even when we complicate the process
- God shows himself as one who knows us and wants to be known by us
- The New Testament uses Hagar as a symbol of those who would pursue favor with God by their own efforts, rather than by trusting in his mercy and forgiveness

#### Vital statistics:

- Where: Canaan and Egypt
- Occupation: Servant, mother
- Relatives: Son: Ishmael

#### Key verse:

"And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands" (Genesis 16:9).

Hagar's story is told in Genesis 16; 21. She is also mentioned in Galatians 4:24, 25.

**22:1** The word *tempt*, in this context, means *test*. God gave Abraham a test, not to trip him and watch him fall, but to deepen his capacity to obey God and thus to develop his character. Just as fire refines ore to extract precious metals, God refines us through difficult circumstances. When we are tested we can complain, or we can try to see how God is stretching us to develop our character.

**22:3** That morning Abraham began one of the greatest acts of obedience in recorded history. Over the years he had learned many tough lessons about the importance of obeying God. This

time his obedience was prompt and complete. Obeying God is often a struggle because it may mean giving up something we truly want. We should not expect our obedience to God to be easy or to come naturally.

<sup>6</sup>And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. <sup>7</sup>And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father.

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

And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where *is* the lamb for a burnt offering?

<sup>8</sup>And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.

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

<sup>11</sup>And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham.

And he said, Here *am* I.

<sup>12</sup>And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.

<sup>13</sup>And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind *him* a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. <sup>14</sup>And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.

<sup>15</sup>And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, <sup>16</sup>and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: <sup>17</sup>that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; <sup>18</sup>and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice. <sup>19</sup>So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beer-sheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beer-sheba.

<sup>20</sup>And it came to pass after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, Behold, Milcah, she hath also born children unto thy brother Nahor; <sup>21</sup>Huz his firstborn, and Buz his brother, and Kemuel the father of Aram, <sup>22</sup>and Chesed, and Hazo, and Pildash, and Jidlaph, and Bethuel. <sup>23</sup>And Bethuel begat Rebekah: these eight Milcah did bear to Nahor, Abraham's brother. <sup>24</sup>And his concubine, whose name *was* Reumah, she bare also Tebah, and Gaham, and Thahash, and Maachah.

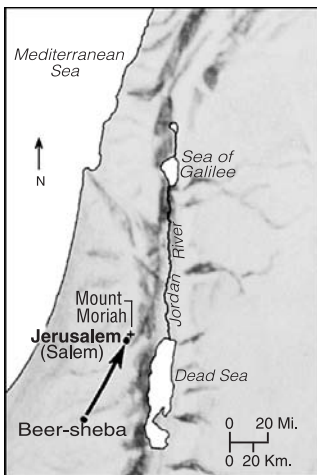
*Abraham buries Sarah*

**23** And Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old: *these were* the years of the life of Sarah. <sup>2</sup>And Sarah died in Kirjath-arba; the same *is* Hebron in the land of Canaan: and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her.

**22:6**  
John 19:17  
**22:7**  
Gen 8:20  
Exod 29:38-42  
John 1:29, 36  
Rev 13:8  
**22:9**  
Heb 11:17-19  
Jas 2:21  
**22:11**  
Gen 16:7; 21:17  
**22:12**  
Heb 11:17  
**22:13**  
Gen 8:20  
**22:14**  
Gen 22:7-8  
**22:16**  
<sup>†</sup>Heb 6:13-14  
**22:17**  
Gen 12:2; 15:5;  
26:4  
<sup>†</sup>Heb 6:14  
**22:18**  
<sup>†</sup>Acts 3:25  
<sup>†</sup>Gal 3:8, 16  
**22:19**  
Gen 21:14  
**22:20**  
Gen 11:29  
**22:23**  
Gen 24:15  
**23:2**  
Josh 14:15

**22:7, 8** Why did God ask Abraham to perform human sacrifice? Heathen nations practice human sacrifice, but God condemned this as a terrible sin (Leviticus 20:1-5). God did not want Isaac

**ABRAHAM'S TRIP TO MOUNT MORIAH**  
Abraham and Isaac traveled the 50 to 60 miles from Beer-sheba to Mount Moriah in about three days. This was a very difficult time for Abraham, who was on his way to sacrifice his beloved son, Isaac.



to die, but he wanted Abraham to sacrifice Isaac in his heart so it would be clear that Abraham loved God more than he loved his promised and long-awaited son. God was testing Abraham and the purpose of testing is to strengthen our character and deepen our commitment to God. Through this difficult experience, Abraham strengthened his commitment to obey God. He also learned about God's ability to provide.

**22:13** Notice the parallel between the ram offered on the altar as a substitute for Isaac and Christ offered on the cross as a substitute for us. Whereas God stopped Abraham from sacrificing his son, God did not spare his own Son, Jesus, from dying on the cross. If Jesus had lived, the rest of mankind would have died. God sent his only Son to die for us so that we could be spared from the eternal death we deserve and instead receive eternal life (John 3:16).

**22:15-18** Abraham received abundant blessings because he obeyed God. God promised to give Abraham's descendants the ability to conquer their enemies. In addition, God promised Abraham children and grandchildren who would in turn bless the whole earth. People's lives would be changed as a result of knowing Abraham and his descendants. We often think of blessings as gifts that we will enjoy. But when God blesses us, his blessings may also overflow to others—today and into eternity.

**23:1-4** In Abraham's day, death and burial were steeped in ritual and traditions. Failing to honor a dead person demonstrated the greatest possible lack of respect. An improper burial was the

23:3  
Gen 10:15

23:4  
Lev 25:23  
1 Chr 29:15  
Ps 39:12  
Heb 11:9

23:6  
Gen 14:14-16

23:8-9  
Gen 25:9

23:10  
Ruth 4:1, 11

23:15  
Exod 30:13

23:16  
Jer 32:9

23:17-18  
Gen 25:9;  
49:29-30; 50:13

<sup>3</sup>And Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spake unto the sons of Heth, saying, <sup>4</sup>*am* a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a buryingplace with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.

<sup>5</sup>And the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying unto him, <sup>6</sup>Hear us, my lord: thou *art* a mighty prince among us: in the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead; none of us shall withhold from thee his sepulchre, but that thou mayest bury thy dead.

<sup>7</sup>And Abraham stood up, and bowed himself to the people of the land, *even* to the children of Heth. <sup>8</sup>And he communed with them, saying, If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight; hear me, and intreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar, <sup>9</sup>that he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he hath, which *is* in the end of his field; for as much money as it is worth he shall give it me for a possession of a buryingplace amongst you.

<sup>10</sup>And Ephron dwelt among the children of Heth: and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth, *even* of all that went in at the gate of his city, saying, <sup>11</sup>Nay, my lord, hear me: the field give I thee, and the cave that *is* therein, I give it thee; in the presence of the sons of my people give I it thee: bury thy dead.

<sup>12</sup>And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land. <sup>13</sup>And he spake unto Ephron in the audience of the people of the land, saying, But if thou *wilt give it*, I pray thee, hear me: I will give thee money for the field; take *it* of me, and I will bury my dead there.

<sup>14</sup>And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him, <sup>15</sup>My lord, hearken unto me: the land *is worth* four hundred shekels of silver; what *is* that betwixt me and thee? bury therefore thy dead. <sup>16</sup>And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron; and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current *money* with the merchant.

<sup>17</sup>And the field of Ephron, which *was* in Machpelah, which *was* before Mamre, the field, and the cave which *was* therein, and all the trees that *were* in the field, that *were* in all the borders round about, were made sure <sup>18</sup>unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city.

<sup>19</sup>And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre: the same *is* Hebron in the land of Canaan. <sup>20</sup>And the field, and the cave that *is* therein, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a buryingplace by the sons of Heth.

23:4 *sojourner*: guest. 23:6 *sepulchres*: burial places. 23:8 *communed*: spoke. 23:15 *betwixt*: between.

equivalent of a curse. Mourning was an essential part of the death ritual. Friends and relatives would cry loudly for the whole neighborhood to hear. Since there were no funeral homes or undertakers, these same friends and relatives would help prepare the body for burial, which usually would take place on the same day because of the warm climate.

**23:4-6** Abraham was in a foreign land looking for a place to bury his wife. Strangers offered to help him because he was "a mighty prince" and they respected him. Although Abraham had not put down roots in the area, his reputation was above reproach. Those who invest their time and money in serving God often earn a pleasant return on their investment—a good reputation and the respect of others.

**23:10-16** The polite interchange between Abraham and Ephron was typical of bargaining at that time. Ephron graciously offered to give his land to Abraham at no charge; Abraham insisted on paying for it; Ephron politely mentioned the price but said, in effect, that it wasn't important; Abraham paid the 400 shekels of silver. Both men knew what was going on as they went through the bargaining process. If Abraham had accepted the land as a gift when it was offered, he would have insulted Ephron, who then would have rescinded his offer. Many Middle Eastern shopkeepers still follow this bargaining ritual with their customers.

**23:16** Four hundred shekels of silver was a high price for the piece of property Abraham bought. The "sons of Heth," or Hittites, weren't thrilled about foreigners buying their property, so Abraham had little bargaining leverage.

Ephron asked an outrageous price. The custom of the day was to ask double the fair market value of the land, fully expect-

ing the buyer to offer half the stated price. Abraham, however, did not bargain. He simply paid the initial price. He was not trying to take anything he didn't deserve. Even though God had promised the land to Abraham, he did not just take it away from Ephron.



#### CAVE OF MACHPELAH

Sarah died in Hebron. Abraham bought the Cave of Machpelah near Hebron as her burial place. Abraham was also buried there, as were his son and grandson, Isaac and Jacob.



**6. Isaac marries Rebekah**

**24** And Abraham was old, *and* well stricken in age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. <sup>2</sup>And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: <sup>3</sup>and I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: <sup>4</sup>but thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.

**24:1**  
Gen 12:2; 24:35

**24:2**  
Gen 47:29

**24:3**  
Gen 14:19

**24:4**  
Gen 12:1

**24:5**  
Gen 24:39

<sup>5</sup>And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest?

**24:7**  
Gen 12:1, 7; 16:7; 22:11  
Rom 4:13  
<sup>1</sup>Gal 3:16

<sup>6</sup>And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again. <sup>7</sup>The LORD God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence.

<sup>8</sup>And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again. <sup>9</sup>And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter.

<sup>10</sup>And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master *were* in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor. <sup>11</sup>And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, *even* the time that women go out to draw water. <sup>12</sup>And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham. <sup>13</sup>Behold, I stand *here* by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: <sup>14</sup>and let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: *let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac;* and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.

**24:10**  
Gen 11:29  
Deut 23:4

**24:11**  
Gen 24:42

**24:12**  
Gen 24:27, 48

**24:14**  
Judg 6:17  
1 Sam 14:10

<sup>15</sup>And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder. <sup>16</sup>And the damsel *was* very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up. <sup>17</sup>And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher.

**24:15**  
Gen 22:20-24

**24:16**  
Gen 12:11; 29:17

**24:17**  
1 Kgs 17:10  
John 4:7

<sup>18</sup>And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hastened, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink. <sup>19</sup>And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking. <sup>20</sup>And she hastened, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels. <sup>21</sup>And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not.

**24:19**  
Gen 24:14

**24:1** *stricken:* advanced. **24:5** *peradventure:* suppose. **24:12** *good speed:* success.

**24:4** Abraham wanted Isaac to marry within the family, a common and acceptable practice at this time that had the added advantage of avoiding intermarriage with heathen neighbors. A son's wife was usually chosen by the parents. It was common for a woman to be married in her early teens, although Rebekah was probably older.

**24:9** In Abraham's culture, this was how an agreement was sealed or a covenant ratified. To accomplish the same purpose, we shake hands, swear oaths, or sign documents in the presence of a notary public.

**24:11** The well, the chief source of water for an entire village, was usually located outside the town along the main road. Many people had to walk a mile or more for their water. They could use only what they could carry home. Farmers and shepherds would come from nearby fields to draw water for their animals. The well was a good place to meet new friends or chat with old ones. Rebekah would have visited the well twice daily to draw water for her family.

**24:12** Abraham's servant asked God for guidance in this very important task. Obviously Eliezer (see 15:2) had learned much about faith and about God from his master. What are your family members, friends, and associates learning about God from watching you? Be like Abraham, setting an example of dependent faith. And be like Eliezer, asking God for guidance before any venture.

**24:14** Was it right for Abraham's servant to ask God for such a specific sign? The sign he requested was only slightly out of the ordinary. The hospitality of the day required women at the well to offer water to weary travelers, but not to their animals. Eliezer was simply asking God to show him a woman with an attitude of service—someone who would go beyond the expected. Eliezer did not ask for a woman with good looks or wealth. He knew the importance of finding a woman with the right heart, and he asked God to help him with this task.

**24:15, 16** Rebekah had physical beauty, but the servant was looking for a sign of inner beauty. Appearance is important to us, and we spend time and money improving it. But how do we develop our inner beauty? Patience, kindness, and joy are the beauty treatments that help us become truly lovely—on the inside.

**24:18–20** Rebekah's servant spirit was clearly demonstrated as she willingly and quickly drew water for Eliezer and his camels. The pots used for carrying water were large and heavy. A thirsty camel drinks a lot of water—up to 25 gallons after a week's travel. Seeing Rebekah go to work, Eliezer knew this was a woman with a heart for doing far more than the bare minimum. Do you have a "servant spirit"? When asked to help or when you see a need, go beyond the minimum.



24:22  
Gen 24:47

<sup>22</sup>And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten *shekels* weight of gold; <sup>23</sup>and said, Whose daughter *art* thou? tell me, I pray thee: is there room *in* thy father's house for us to lodge in?

24:24  
Gen 24:15

<sup>24</sup>And she said unto him, I *am* the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor. <sup>25</sup>She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in.

24:26  
Exod 4:31

<sup>26</sup>And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD. <sup>27</sup>And he said, Blessed *be* the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I *being* in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren. <sup>28</sup>And the damsel ran, and told *them* of her mother's house these things.

24:27  
Gen 14:20;  
24:12, 48

24:28  
Gen 29:12

<sup>29</sup>And Rebekah had a brother, and his name *was* Laban: and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well. <sup>30</sup>And it came to pass, when he saw the earring and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me; that he came unto the man; and, behold, he stood by the camels at the well. <sup>31</sup>And he said, Come in, thou blessed of the LORD; wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels.

24:29  
Gen 25:20; 29:5

24:30  
Gen 24:10

24:31  
Gen 26:29

<sup>32</sup>And the man came into the house: and he ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that *were* with him. <sup>33</sup>And there was set *meat* before him to eat: but he said, I will not eat, until I have told mine errand.

And he said, Speak on.

24:34  
Gen 24:1

24:35  
Gen 12:2

24:36  
Gen 21:1-7; 25:5

24:37  
Gen 24:2-4

<sup>34</sup>And he said, I *am* Abraham's servant. <sup>35</sup>And the LORD hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses. <sup>36</sup>And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath. <sup>37</sup>And my master made me swear, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell: <sup>38</sup>but thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son. <sup>39</sup>And I said unto my master, Peradventure the woman will not follow me. <sup>40</sup>And he said unto me, The LORD, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way; and thou shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred, and of my father's house: <sup>41</sup>then shalt thou be clear from *this* my oath, when thou comest to my kindred; and if they give not thee *one*, thou shalt be clear from my oath.

24:40  
Gen 24:7

<sup>42</sup>And I came this day unto the well, and said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, if now thou do prosper my way which I go: <sup>43</sup>behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come

24:25 provender: feed. 24:32 ungirded: unloaded.

#### ELIEZER: PROFILE OF A TRUE SERVANT

Have you ever approached a responsibility with this kind of single-mindedness and careful planning, while ultimately depending on God?

Accepted the challenge . . . . .	24:3, 9
Examined alternatives . . . . .	24:5
Promised to follow instructions . . . . .	24:9
Made a plan . . . . .	24:12-14
Submitted the plan to God . . . . .	24:12-14
Prayed for guidance . . . . .	24:12-14
Devised a strategy with room for God to operate . . . . .	24:12-14
Waited . . . . .	24:21
Watched carefully . . . . .	24:21
Accepted the answer thankfully . . . . .	24:26
Explained the situation to concerned parties . . . . .	24:34-49
Refused unnecessary delay . . . . .	24:56
Followed through with entire plan . . . . .	24:66

**24:26, 27** As soon as Abraham's servant knew that God had answered his prayer, he thanked God for his goodness and guidance. God will also use and lead us if we are available ("in the way") like Eliezer. Our first response should be praise and thanksgiving that God would choose to work in and through us.

**24:42, 48** When Eliezer told his story to Laban, he spoke openly of God and his goodness. Often we do the opposite, afraid that we will be misunderstood, rejected, or seen as "too religious." Instead, we should share openly what God is doing in our lives.

to pass, that when the virgin cometh forth to draw *water*, and I say to her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water of thy pitcher to drink; <sup>44</sup>and she say to me, Both drink thou, and I will also draw for thy camels: *let* the same *be* the woman whom the LORD hath appointed out for my master's son.

<sup>45</sup>And before I had done speaking in mine heart, behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down unto the well, and drew *water*: and I said unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee. <sup>46</sup>And she made haste, and let down her pitcher from her *shoulder*, and said, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: so I drank, and she made the camels drink also. <sup>47</sup>And I asked her, and said, Whose daughter *art* thou? And she said, The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bare unto him: and I put the earring upon her face, and the bracelets upon her hands. <sup>48</sup>And I bowed down my head, and worshipped the LORD, and blessed the LORD God of my master Abraham, which had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter unto his son. <sup>49</sup>And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me: and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left.

24:45  
1 Sam 1:13

24:47  
Gen 24:23-24

24:49  
Gen 47:29

<sup>50</sup>Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, The thing proceedeth from the LORD: we cannot speak unto thee bad or good. <sup>51</sup>Behold, Rebekah *is* before thee, take *her*, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the LORD hath spoken.

24:50  
Ps 118:23

<sup>52</sup>And it came to pass, that, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshipped the LORD, *bowing himself* to the earth. <sup>53</sup>And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave *them* to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things.

24:52  
Gen 24:26

<sup>54</sup>And they did eat and drink, he and the men that *were* with him, and tarried all night; and they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master.

24:54  
Gen 30:25

<sup>55</sup>And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us *a few* days, at the least ten; after that she shall go.

24:55  
Judg 19:4

<sup>56</sup>And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the LORD hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master.

<sup>57</sup>And they said, We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth. <sup>58</sup>And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man?

And she said, I will go.

<sup>59</sup>And they sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men. <sup>60</sup>And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou *art* our sister, be thou *the mother* of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.

24:59  
Gen 35:8

<sup>61</sup>And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.

24:60  
Gen 17:16; 22:17

<sup>62</sup>And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahai-roi; for he dwelt in the south country. <sup>63</sup>And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels *were* coming. <sup>64</sup>And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. <sup>65</sup>For she *had* said unto the servant, What man *is* this that walketh in the field to meet us?

24:62  
Gen 16:14

24:63  
Ps 119:15, 27, 48

And the servant *had* said, It is my master: therefore she took a veil, and covered herself.

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

24:67  
Gen 23:1-2; 25:20; 29:18

## 7. Abraham dies

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

25:1-4  
\*1 Chr 1:32-33

<sup>5</sup>And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac. <sup>6</sup>But unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east country.

25:5  
Gen 24:35-36

24:54 *tarried*: stayed. 24:63 *eventide*: evening. 24:64 *lighted off*: got down from.

24:60 "Let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them" could be translated "May you overcome all your enemies."

24:65 When Rebekah learned that the man coming to greet

them was Isaac, her husband-to-be, she followed two Oriental customs. She dismounted from her camel to show respect, and she placed a veil over her face as a bride.

25:7  
Gen 12:4

25:8  
Gen 15:15; 25:17;  
35:29; 49:29, 33

25:9-10  
Gen 23:17-18;  
49:29; 50:13

25:11  
Gen 12:2; 24:62

25:12-16  
#1 Chr 1:29-31

25:17  
Gen 25:8

25:18  
Gen 16:12; 20:1

<sup>7</sup>And these *are* the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years. <sup>8</sup>Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people. <sup>9</sup>And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which *is* before Mamre; <sup>10</sup>the field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth: there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife. <sup>11</sup>And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac; and Isaac dwelt by the well Lahai-roi.

<sup>12</sup>Now these *are* the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bare unto Abraham: <sup>13</sup>and these *are* the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: the firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth; and Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibsam, <sup>14</sup>and Mishma, and Dumah, and Massa, <sup>15</sup>Hadar, and Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah: <sup>16</sup>these *are* the sons of Ishmael, and these *are* their names, by their towns, and by their castles; twelve princes according to their nations. <sup>17</sup>And these *are* the years of the life of Ishmael, an hundred and thirty and seven years: and he gave up the ghost and died; and was gathered unto his people. <sup>18</sup>And they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur, that *is* before Egypt, as thou goest toward Assyria: *and* he died in the presence of all his brethren.

### E. THE STORY OF ISAAC (25:19—28:9)

Isaac inherited everything from his father, including God's promise to make his descendants into a great nation. As a boy, Isaac did not resist as his father prepared to sacrifice him, and as a man, he gladly accepted the wife that others chose for him. Through Isaac, we learn how to let God guide our life and place his will ahead of our own.

25:8 *gave up the ghost*: breathed his last.



REBEKAH

Some people are initiators. They help get the ball rolling. Rebekah would easily stand out in this group. Her life was characterized by initiative. When she saw a need she took action, even though the action was not always right.

It was Rebekah's initiative that first caught the attention of Eliezer, the servant Abraham sent to find a wife for Isaac. It was common courtesy to give a drink to a stranger, but it took added character to also fetch water for ten thirsty camels. Later after hearing the details of Eliezer's mission, Rebekah was immediately willing to be Isaac's bride.

Several later events help us see how initiative can be misdirected. Rebekah was aware that God's plan would be channeled through Jacob, not Esau (Genesis 25:23). So not only did Jacob become her favorite, she actually planned ways to ensure that he would overshadow his older twin. Meanwhile, Isaac preferred Esau. This created a conflict between husband and wife. Rebekah felt justified in deceiving her husband when the time came to bless the sons, and her ingenious plan was carried out to perfection.

Most of the time we try to justify the things we choose to do. Often we attempt to add God's approval to our actions. We are responsible for what we do and must always be cautious about our motives. When thinking about a course of action, are you simply seeking God's stamp of approval on something you've already decided to do? Initiative and action are admirable and right when they are controlled by God's wisdom.

#### Strengths and accomplishments:

- When confronted with a need she took immediate action
- She was accomplishment-oriented

#### Weaknesses and mistakes:

- Her initiative was not always balanced by wisdom
- She favored one of her sons
- She deceived her husband

#### Lessons from her life:

- Our actions must be guided by God's Word
- God makes use even of our mistakes in his plan
- Parental favoritism hurts a family

#### Vital statistics:

- Where: Haran, Canaan
- Occupation: Wife, mother, household manager
- Relatives: Grandparents: Nahor and Milcah. Father: Bethuel. Husband: Isaac. Brother: Laban. Twin sons: Esau and Jacob.

#### Key verses:

"And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death" (Genesis 24:67).  
 "And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob" (Genesis 25:28).

Rebekah's story is told in Genesis 24—27. She is also mentioned in Romans 9:10.

**1. Jacob and Esau, Isaac's twin sons**

<sup>19</sup>And these *are* the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham begat Isaac: <sup>20</sup>and Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan-aram, the sister to Laban the Syrian. <sup>21</sup>And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she *was* barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. <sup>22</sup>And the children struggled together within her; and she said, *If it be so, why am I thus?* And she went to inquire of the LORD.

**25:21**  
Gen 21:2

<sup>23</sup>And the LORD said unto her, Two nations *are* in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and *the one* people shall be stronger than *the other* people; and the elder shall serve the younger.

**25:23**  
Gen 17:2-4; 27:29; 48:19  
Num 20:14  
Deut 2:4, 8  
1Rom 9:11-12

<sup>24</sup>And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, *there were* twins in her womb.

<sup>25</sup>And the first came out red, all over like a hairy garment; and they called his name Esau.

**25:25**  
Gen 27:11

<sup>26</sup>And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac *was* threescore years old when she bare them.

**25:26**  
Hos 12:3

*Esau sells his birthright*

<sup>27</sup>And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob *was* a plain man, dwelling in tents. <sup>28</sup>And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of *his* venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob.

<sup>29</sup>And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he *was* faint: <sup>30</sup>and Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red *pottage*; for I *am* faint: therefore was his name called Edom.

**25:30**  
Gen 36:1, 8

<sup>31</sup>And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright.

**25:31**  
Deut 21:16-17  
1 Chr 5:1-2

<sup>32</sup>And Esau said, Behold, I *am* at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?

<sup>33</sup>And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. <sup>34</sup>Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised *his* birthright.

**25:33**  
Gen 27:36  
Heb 12:16

**2. Isaac and King Abimelech**

**26** And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar.

**26:1**  
Gen 12:10; 20:1-2

**25:21** *intreated*: pleaded with. **25:29** *sod pottage*: cooked stew.

**25:21** As Isaac pleaded with God for children, so the Bible encourages us to ask and even plead for our most personal and important requests. God wants to give us good things, but he wants us to ask for them. Even then, as Isaac learned, God may decide to withhold his answer for a while in order to (1) deepen our insight into what we really need, (2) broaden our appreciation for his answers, or (3) allow us to mature so we can use his gifts more wisely.

**ISAAC'S MOVE TO GERAR**

Isaac had settled near Beer-lahai-roi ("the well Lahai-roi"), where his sons, Jacob and Esau, were born. A famine drove him to Gerar. But when he became wealthy, his jealous neighbors asked him to leave. From Gerar he moved to Beer-sheba.



**25:25** Esau sounds like the Hebrew word for "hair."

**25:31** A birthright was a special honor given to the firstborn son. It included a double portion of the family inheritance along with the honor of one day becoming the family leader. The oldest son could sell his birthright or give it away if he chose, but in so doing, he would lose both material goods and his leadership position. By trading his birthright, Esau showed complete disregard for the spiritual blessings that would have come his way if he had kept it.

**25:32, 33** Esau traded the lasting benefits of his birthright for the immediate pleasure of food. He acted on impulse, satisfying his immediate desires without pausing to consider the long-range consequences of what he was about to do. We can fall into the same trap. When we see something we want, our first impulse is to get it. At first we feel intensely satisfied and sometimes even powerful because we have obtained what we set out to get. But immediate pleasure often loses sight of the future. We can avoid making Esau's mistake by comparing the short-term satisfaction with its long-range consequences before we act.

Esau exaggerated his hunger. "I am at the point to die," he said. This thinking made his choice much easier, for if he was starving, what good was an inheritance anyway? The desire of the moment distorted his perspective and made his decision seem urgent. We may have similar experiences. For example, when we feel sexual pressure, a marriage license may seem unimportant. Nothing else seems to matter, and we lose our perspective. Getting through that short, pressure-filled moment is often the hardest part of overcoming a temptation.

**26:1** The Philistines would become some of Israel's fiercest enemies. *Philistine* means "sea people," for they originally were

26:2  
Gen 12:1, 7

26:3  
Gen 12:7; 15:15,  
18

26:4  
Gen 15:5; 22:17  
Exod 32:13  
†Acts 3:25  
†Gal 3:8

<sup>2</sup>And the LORD appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of: <sup>3</sup>sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father; <sup>4</sup>and I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; <sup>5</sup>because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.

### *Isaac deceives the king*

26:7  
Gen 12:11-13;  
20:2, 12

<sup>6</sup>And Isaac dwelt in Gerar: <sup>7</sup>and the men of the place asked *him* of his wife; and he said, She is my sister: for he feared to say, *She is my wife*; lest, *said he*, the men of the place should kill

26:3 *sojourn*: live.



# ESAU

Common sense isn't all that common. In fact, the common thread in many decisions is that they don't make sense. Esau's life was filled with choices he must have regretted bitterly. He appears to have been a person who found it hard to consider consequences, reacting to the need of the moment without realizing what he was giving up to meet that need. Trading his birthright for a bowl of pottage (stew) was the clearest example of this weakness. He also chose wives in direct opposition to his parents' wishes. He learned the hard way.

What are you willing to trade for the things you want? Do you find yourself, at times, willing to negotiate *anything* for what you feel you need *now*? Does your family, spouse, integrity, body, or soul get included in these deals? Do you sometimes feel that the important parts of life escaped while you were grabbing for something else?

If so, your initial response, like Esau's, may be deep anger. In itself that isn't wrong, as long as you direct the energy of that anger toward a solution and not toward yourself or others as the cause of the problem. Your greatest need is to find a focal point other than "what I need now." The only worthy focal point is God. A relationship with him will not only give an ultimate purpose to your life, it will also be a daily guideline for living. Meet him in the pages of the Bible.

#### **Strengths and accomplishments:**

- Ancestor of the Edomites
- Known for his archery skill
- Able to forgive after explosive anger

#### **Weaknesses and mistakes:**

- When faced with important decisions, tended to choose according to the immediate need rather than the long-range effect
- Angered his parents by poor marriage choices

#### **Lessons from his life:**

- God allows certain events in our lives to accomplish his overall purposes, but we are still responsible for our actions
- Consequences are important to consider
- It is possible to have great anger and yet not sin

#### **Vital statistics:**

- Where: Canaan
- Occupation: Herdsman, skillful hunter
- Relatives: Parents: Isaac and Rebekah. Brother: Jacob. Wives: Judith, Basemath, and Mahalath.

#### **Key verses:**

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears" (Hebrews 12:14-17).

Esau's story is told in Genesis 25-36. He is also mentioned in Malachi 1:2, 3; Romans 9:13; Hebrews 12:16, 17.

sailors from the Mediterranean Sea. These people, living along the southwest coast, were few but ferocious in battle. Although friendly to Isaac, this small group was the forerunner of the nation that would plague Israel during the time of Joshua, the judges, and David.

**26:7-11** Isaac was afraid that the men in Gerar would kill him to get his beautiful wife, Rebekah. So he lied, claiming that

Rebekah was his sister. Where did he learn that trick? Evidently he knew about the actions of his father, Abraham (see 12:10-13 and 20:1-5). Parents help shape the world's future by the way they shape their children's values. The first step toward helping children live right is for the parents to live right. Your actions are often copied by those closest to you. What kind of example are you setting for your children?



me for Rebekah; because she *was* fair to look upon. <sup>8</sup>And it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window, and saw, and behold, Isaac *was* sporting with Rebekah his wife. <sup>9</sup>And Abimelech called Isaac, and said, Behold, of a surety she *is* thy wife: and how saidst thou, She *is* my sister?

And Isaac said unto him, Because I said, Lest I die for her.

<sup>10</sup>And Abimelech said, What *is* this thou hast done unto us? one of the people might lightly have lien with thy wife, and thou shouldst have brought guiltiness upon us. <sup>11</sup>And Abimelech charged all *his* people, saying, He that toucheth this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.

26:10  
Gen 20:7-10

*Isaac refuses to fight*

<sup>12</sup>Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the LORD blessed him. <sup>13</sup>And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great: <sup>14</sup>for he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants: and the Philistines envied him. <sup>15</sup>For all the wells which his father's servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped them, and filled them with earth. <sup>16</sup>And Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us; for thou art much mightier than we.

26:12  
Gen 26:3  
26:13  
Gen 24:35; 25:5  
26:15  
Gen 21:25  
26:16  
Exod 1:9

<sup>17</sup>And Isaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there. <sup>18</sup>And Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham: and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them.

<sup>19</sup>And Isaac's servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing water. <sup>20</sup>And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac's herdmen, saying, The water *is* ours: and he called the name of the well Esek; because they strove with him. <sup>21</sup>And they digged another well, and strove for that also: and he called the name of it Sitnah. <sup>22</sup>And he removed from thence, and digged another well; and for that they strove not: and he called the name of it Rehoboth; and he said, For now the LORD hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.

26:19  
John 4:10-11  
26:22  
Pss 4:1; 18:19  
Isa 54:2

<sup>23</sup>And he went up from thence to Beer-sheba. <sup>24</sup>And the LORD appeared unto him the same night, and said, I *am* the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I *am* with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake. <sup>25</sup>And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there: and there Isaac's servants digged a well.

26:23  
Gen 22:19  
26:24  
Gen 17:7; 22:17  
Exod 3:6  
26:25  
Gen 12:7-8; 13:4

<sup>26</sup>Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar, and Ahuzzath one of his friends, and Pichol the chief captain of his army. <sup>27</sup>And Isaac said unto them, Wherefore come ye to me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you?

26:26  
Gen 21:22  
26:27  
Gen 26:16

<sup>28</sup>And they said, We saw certainly that the LORD was with thee: and we said, Let there be now an oath betwixt us, *even* betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee; <sup>29</sup>that thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace: thou *art* now the blessed of the LORD.

26:28  
Gen 21:22-23

26:8 at: through. sporting: caressing. 26:10 lightly: carelessly. 26:13 waxed: grew. 26:28 betwixt: between.

**26:12-16** God kept his promise to bless Isaac. The neighboring Philistines grew jealous because everything Isaac did seemed to go right. So they stopped his wells with dirt and tried to get rid of him. Jealousy is a dividing force strong enough to tear apart the mightiest of nations or the closest of friends. It forces you to separate yourself from what you were longing for in the first place. When you find yourself becoming jealous of others, try thanking God for their good fortune. Before striking out in anger, consider what you could lose (a friend, a job, a mate?).

**26:17, 18** The desolate Gerar area was located on the edge of a wilderness. Water was as precious as gold. A person who dug a well was staking a claim to the land. Some wells had locks to keep thieves from stealing the water. To "stop" or plug up someone's well was an act of war; it was one of the most serious crimes in the land. Isaac had every right

to fight back when the Philistines ruined his wells, yet he chose to keep the peace. In the end, the Philistines respected him for his patience.

**26:17-22** Three times Isaac and his men dug new wells. When the first two disputes arose, Isaac moved on. Finally, room was available for everyone. Rather than start a huge conflict, Isaac compromised for the sake of peace. Would you be willing to forsake an important position or valuable possession to keep peace? Ask God for the wisdom to know when to withdraw and when to stand and fight.

**26:20-22** The names of these wells had specific meanings. *Esek* means "The Well of Argument"; *Sitnah* means "the Well of Anger"; *Rehoboth* means "The Well of Room Enough for Us at Last." Isaac was rewarded for his tenacity. He was guaranteed prosperity because he had an ample supply of water.

**26:26-31** With his enemies wanting to make peace, Isaac was quick to respond, turning the occasion into a celebration. We



26:30  
Gen 31:54

26:31  
Gen 21:31

26:33  
Gen 21:31

<sup>30</sup>And he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink. <sup>31</sup>And they rose up betimes in the morning, and swore one to another: and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace.

<sup>32</sup>And it came to pass the same day, that Isaac's servants came, and told him concerning the well which they had digged, and said unto him, We have found water. <sup>33</sup>And he called it Shebah: therefore the name of the city is Beer-sheba unto this day.



JACOB

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are among the most significant people in the Old Testament. It is important to realize that this significance is not based upon their personal characters, but upon the character of God. They were all men who earned the grudging respect and even fear of their peers; they were wealthy and powerful, and yet each was capable of lying, deceit, and selfishness. They were not the perfect heroes we might have expected; instead, they were just like us, trying to please God but often falling short.

Jacob was the third link in God's plan to start a nation from Abraham. The success of that plan was more often in spite of, rather than because of, Jacob's life. Before Jacob was born, God promised that his plan would be worked out through Jacob and not his twin brother, Esau. Although Jacob's methods were not always respectable, his skill, determination, and patience have to be admired. As we follow him from birth to death, we are able to see God's work.

Jacob's life had four stages, each marked by a personal encounter with God. In the first stage, Jacob lived up to his name, which means "one who supplants, undermines, or grabs." He grabbed Esau's heel at birth, and by the time he fled from home, he had also grabbed his brother's birthright and blessing. During his flight, God first appeared to him. Not only did God confirm to Jacob his blessing, but he awakened in Jacob a personal knowledge of himself. In the second stage, Jacob experienced life from the other side, being manipulated and deceived by Laban. But there is a curious change: The Jacob of stage one would simply have left Laban, whereas the Jacob of stage two, after deciding to leave, waited six years for God's permission. In the third stage, Jacob was in a new role as grabber. This time, by the Jordan River, he grabbed on to God and wouldn't let go. He realized his dependence on the God who had continued to bless him. His relationship to God became essential to his life, and his name was changed to Israel, "a prince who prevails with God." Jacob's last stage of life was to *be* grabbed—God achieved a firm hold on him. In responding to Joseph's invitation to come to Egypt, Jacob was clearly unwilling to make a move without God's approval.

Can you think of times when God has made himself known to you? Do you allow yourself to meet him as you study his Word? What difference have these experiences made in your life? Are you more like the young Jacob, forcing God to track you down in the wilderness of your own plans and mistakes? Or are you more like the Jacob who placed his desires and plans before God for his approval before taking any action?

**Strengths and accomplishments:**

- Father of the 12 tribes of Israel
- Third in the Abrahamic line of God's plan
- Determined, willing to work long and hard for what he wanted
- Good businessman

**Weaknesses and mistakes:**

- When faced with conflict, relied on his own resources rather than going to God for help
- Tended to accumulate wealth for its own sake

**Lessons from his life:**

- Security does not lie in the accumulation of goods
- All human intentions and actions—for good or evil—are woven by God into his ongoing plan

**Vital statistics:**

- Where: Canaan
- Occupation: Shepherd, livestock owner
- Relatives: Parents: Isaac and Rebekah. Brother: Esau. Father-in-law: Laban. Wives: Rachel and Leah. Twelve sons and one daughter are mentioned in the Bible.

**Key verse:**

"And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of" (Genesis 28:15).

Jacob's story is told in Genesis 25—50. He is also mentioned in Hosea 12:2–5; Matthew 1:2; 22:32; Acts 7:8–16; Romans 9:11–13; 11:26; Hebrews 11:9, 20, 21.

should be just as receptive to those who want to patch things up with us. When God's influence in our lives begins to attract

people—even enemies—we must take the opportunity to reach out to them with God's love.

**3. Isaac blesses Jacob instead of Esau**

<sup>34</sup>And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite: <sup>35</sup>which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah.

**26:34**  
Gen 28:8  
**26:35**  
Gen 27:46

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

**27:1**  
Gen 25:25; 48:10

And he said unto him, Behold, *here am I*.

<sup>2</sup>And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death: <sup>3</sup>now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me *some* venison; <sup>4</sup>and make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring *it* to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die.

**27:2**  
Gen 47:29

**27:3**  
Gen 25:27

<sup>5</sup>And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt for venison, and to bring *it*. <sup>6</sup>And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying, <sup>7</sup>Bring me venison, and make me savoury meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before the LORD before my death. <sup>8</sup>Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee. <sup>9</sup>Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth: <sup>10</sup>and thou shalt bring *it* to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death.

**27:4**  
Gen 24:60; 27:19; 48:9

**27:5-6**  
Gen 25:27-28

**27:8**  
Gen 27:13, 43

<sup>11</sup>And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I *am* a smooth man: <sup>12</sup>my father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing.

**27:11**  
Gen 25:25

**27:12**  
Gen 9:25; 27:21-22

<sup>13</sup>And his mother said unto him, Upon me *be* thy curse, my son: only obey my voice, and go fetch me *them*. <sup>14</sup>And he went, and fetched, and brought *them* to his mother: and his mother made savoury meat, such as his father loved. <sup>15</sup>And Rebekah took goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau, which *were* with her in the house, and put them upon Jacob her younger son: <sup>16</sup>and she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck: <sup>17</sup>and she gave the savoury meat and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.

**27:13**  
Gen 27:8

**27:15**  
Gen 27:27

<sup>18</sup>And he came unto his father, and said, My father.

And he said, Here *am I*; who *art* thou, my son?

<sup>19</sup>And Jacob said unto his father, I *am* Esau thy firstborn; I have done according as thou badest me: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me.

**27:19**  
Gen 27:31

<sup>20</sup>And Isaac said unto his son, How *is it* that thou hast found *it* so quickly, my son?

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

<sup>21</sup>And Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou *be* my very son Esau or not. <sup>22</sup>And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father; and he felt him, and said, The voice *is* Jacob's voice, but the hands *are* the hands of Esau. <sup>23</sup>And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: so he blessed him.

**27:21**  
Gen 27:12

**27:23**  
Gen 27:16

<sup>24</sup>And he said, *Art* thou my very son Esau?

**27:4** meat: food. **27:12** peradventure: perhaps. **27:19** badest: told. **27:23** discerned: recognized.

**26:34, 35** Esau married heathen women, and this upset his parents greatly. Most parents have a lifetime of insight into their children's character. They can be a storehouse of good advice. You may not agree with everything your parents say, but at least talk with them and listen carefully. This will help avoid the hard feelings Esau experienced.

**27:5-10** When Rebekah learned that Isaac was preparing to bless Esau, she quickly devised a plan to trick him into blessing Jacob instead. Although God had already told her that Jacob would become the family leader (25:23), Rebekah took matters into her own hands. She resorted to doing something wrong to try to bring about what God had already said would happen. For Rebekah, the end justified the means. No matter how good we think our goals are, we should not attempt to achieve them unjustly. Would God approve of the methods you are using to accomplish your goals?

**27:11, 12** How we react to a moral dilemma often exposes our real motives. Frequently we are more worried about getting caught than about doing what is right. Jacob did not seem concerned about the deceitfulness of his mother's plan; instead he was afraid

of getting in trouble while carrying it out. If you are worried about getting caught, you are probably in a position that is less than honest. Let your fear of getting caught be a warning to do right. Jacob paid a high price for carrying out his dishonest plan.

**27:11-13** Jacob hesitated when he heard Rebekah's deceitful plan. Although he questioned it for the wrong reason (fear of getting caught), he protested and thus gave her one last chance to reconsider. But Rebekah had become so wrapped up in her plan that she no longer saw clearly what she was doing. Sin had trapped her and was degrading her character. Correcting yourself in the middle of doing wrong can bring hurt and disappointment, but it also brings freedom from sin's control.

**27:19** Although Jacob got the blessing he wanted, deceiving his father cost him dearly. These are some of the consequences of that deceit: (1) He never saw his mother again; (2) his brother wanted to kill him; (3) he was deceived by his uncle, Laban; (4) his family became torn by strife; (5) Esau became the founder of an enemy nation; (6) he was exiled from his family for years. Ironically, Jacob would have received the birthright and blessing anyway (25:23).

And he said, *I am*.

27:25  
Gen 27:4

27:27  
Ps 65:10  
Heb 11:20

27:28  
Deut 7:13;  
33:13, 28  
Zech 8:12

27:29  
Gen 9:25-27; 12:3  
Isa 45:14

<sup>25</sup>And he said, Bring *it* near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought *it* near to him, and he did eat: and he brought him wine, and he drank. <sup>26</sup>And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son. <sup>27</sup>And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the LORD hath blessed: <sup>28</sup>therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: <sup>29</sup>let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed *be* every one that curseth thee, and blessed *be* he that blesseth thee.

27:31  
Gen 27:4

27:32  
Gen 27:18

27:33  
Gen 27:35

<sup>30</sup>And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. <sup>31</sup>And he also had made savoury meat, and brought it unto his father, and said unto his father, Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me.

<sup>32</sup>And Isaac his father said unto him, Who *art* thou?

And he said, *I am* thy son, thy firstborn Esau.

<sup>33</sup>And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? where *is* he that hath taken venison, and brought *it* me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? yea, *and* he shall be blessed.

27:34  
Heb 12:17

27:35  
Gen 27:19

27:36  
Gen 25:26

<sup>34</sup>And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, *even* me also, O my father.

<sup>35</sup>And he said, Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing.

<sup>36</sup>And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?

27:37  
Gen 27:28-29

<sup>37</sup>And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him: and what shall I do now unto thee, my son?

<sup>38</sup>And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, *even* me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept.

27:38  
Heb 12:17

27:39  
Heb 11:20

27:40  
2 Kgs 8:20-22

<sup>39</sup>And Isaac his father answered and said unto him, Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above; <sup>40</sup>and by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.

27:41  
Gen 32:3-11; 37:4

<sup>41</sup>And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob.

<sup>42</sup>And these words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah: and she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, *purposing* to kill thee. <sup>43</sup>Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran; <sup>44</sup>and tarry with him a few days, until thy brother's fury turn away; <sup>45</sup>until thy brother's anger turn away from thee, and he forget *that* which thou hast done to him: then I will send, and fetch thee from thence: why should I be deprived also of you both in one day?

27:43  
Gen 27:8

27:44  
Gen 31:41

27:28 *corn*: grain. 27:35 *subtily*: deceit. 27:44 *tarry*: stay.

Imagine how different his life would have been had he and his mother allowed God to do things his way, in his time!

**27:33** In ancient times, a person's word was binding (much like a written contract today), especially when it was a formal oath. This is why Isaac's blessing was irrevocable.

**27:33-37** Before the father died, he performed a ceremony of blessing, in which he officially handed over the birthright to the rightful heir. Although the firstborn son was entitled to the birthright, it was not actually his until the blessing was pronounced. Before the blessing was given, the father could take the birthright away from the oldest son and give it to a more deserving son. But after the blessing was given, the birthright could no longer be taken away. This is why fathers usually waited until late in life to pronounce the blessing. Although Jacob had been given the

birthright by his older brother years before, he still needed his father's blessing to make it binding.

**27:41** Esau was so angry at Jacob that he failed to see his own wrong in giving away the birthright in the first place. Jealous anger pollutes clear thinking by blinding us to the good things we have and making us dwell on what we don't have.

**27:41** When Esau lost the valuable family blessing, his future suddenly changed. Reacting in anger, he decided to kill Jacob. When you lose something of great value, or if others conspire against you and succeed, anger is the first and most natural reaction. But you can control your feelings by (1) recognizing your reaction for what it is, (2) praying for strength, and (3) asking God for help to see the opportunities that even your bad situation may provide.

<sup>46</sup>And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these *which are* of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me? 27:46  
Gen 26:34-35

**28** And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. <sup>2</sup>Arise, go to Padan-aram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother. <sup>3</sup>And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; <sup>4</sup>and give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham. <sup>5</sup>And Isaac sent away Jacob: and he went to Padan-aram unto Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother. 28:1  
Gen 24:3  
28:2  
Gen 25:20  
28:3  
Gen 17:16; 35:11  
28:4  
Gen 12:1-3; 15:7;  
35:11

<sup>6</sup>When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padan-aram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan; <sup>7</sup>and that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Padan-aram; <sup>8</sup>and Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father; <sup>9</sup>then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife. 28:6  
Gen 28:1  
28:8  
Gen 26:35  
28:9  
Gen 36:2

**F. THE STORY OF JACOB (28:10—36:43)**

Jacob did everything, both right and wrong, with great zeal. He deceived his own brother Esau and his father Isaac. He wrestled with an angel and worked fourteen years to marry the woman he loved. Through Jacob we learn how a strong leader can also be a servant. We also see how wrong actions will always come back to haunt us.

**1. Jacob starts a family**

*Jacob's dream*

<sup>10</sup>And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran. <sup>11</sup>And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put *them for* his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. <sup>12</sup>And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. 28:10  
Gen 26:23  
28:12  
Gen 20:3  
Num 12:6  
†John 1:51

<sup>13</sup>And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, *I am* the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; <sup>14</sup>and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. <sup>15</sup>And, behold, *I am* with thee, and will keep thee in all *places* whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done *that* which I have spoken to thee of. 28:14  
Gen 12:2; 13:14;  
22:17  
28:15  
Gen 48:21  
Deut 7:9; 31:6, 8

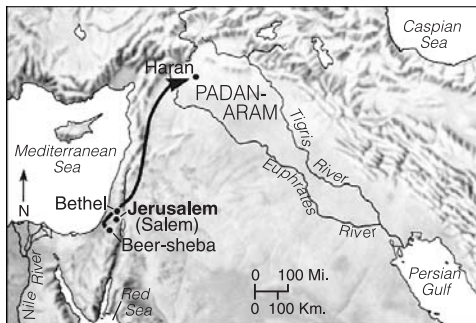
<sup>16</sup>And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew *it* not. <sup>17</sup>And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful *is* this place! *this is* none other but the house of God, and *this is* the gate of heaven. 28:17  
Exod 3:5  
Ps 68:35

28:11 *lighted: came. tarried: stayed.*

**28:9** Ishmael was Isaac's half brother, the son of Abraham and Hagar, Sarah's servant girl (16:1–4, 15). After marrying two foreign girls, Esau hoped his marriage into Ishmael's family would please his parents, Isaac and Rebekah.

**28:10–15** God's covenant promise to Abraham and Isaac was offered to Jacob as well. But it was not enough to be Abraham's grandson; Jacob had to establish his own personal relationship with God. God has no grandchildren; each person must have a personal relationship with him. It is not enough to hear wonderful stories about Christians in your family. You need to become part of the story yourself (see Galatians 3:6, 7).

**28:19** Bethel was about 10 miles north of Jerusalem and 60 miles north of Beer-sheba, where Jacob left his family. This was where Abraham made one of his first sacrifices to God when he entered the land. Later Bethel became a center of idol worship, and the prophet Hosea condemned its evil practices.



**JACOB'S TRIP TO HARAN** After deceiving Esau, Jacob ran for his life, traveling more than 400 miles to Haran where an uncle, Laban, lived. In Haran, Jacob married and started a family.

28:18  
Gen 35:14

28:19  
Gen 12:8; 35:6;  
48:3

28:21  
Exod 15:2

28:22  
Gen 14:20; 35:7  
Deut 14:22

29:1  
Judg 6:3, 33  
29:2  
Gen 24:10-11

29:4  
Gen 28:10

29:5  
Gen 11:29

29:6  
Exod 2:16

29:10  
Exod 2:17

29:11  
Gen 33:4

29:12  
Gen 28:5

29:14  
Judg 9:2  
2 Sam 5:1

29:15  
Gen 30:28;  
31:7, 41

29:16  
Gen 29:25-26

29:17  
Gen 12:11

29:18  
Gen 24:67  
Hos 12:12

29:20  
Song 8:7

<sup>18</sup>And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put *for* his pillows, and set it up *for* a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. <sup>19</sup>And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city *was called* Luz at the first. <sup>20</sup>And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, <sup>21</sup>so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: <sup>22</sup>and this stone, which I have set *for* a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

### *Jacob meets Rachel*

**29** Then Jacob went on his journey, and came into the land of the people of the east. <sup>2</sup>And he looked, and behold a well in the field, and, lo, there *were* three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks: and a great stone *was* upon the well's mouth. <sup>3</sup>And thither *were* all the flocks gathered: and they rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the sheep, and put the stone again upon the well's mouth in his place.

<sup>4</sup>And Jacob said unto them, My brethren, whence *be* ye?  
And they said, Of Haran *are* we.

<sup>5</sup>And he said unto them, Know ye Laban the son of Nahor?  
And they said, We know *him*.

<sup>6</sup>And he said unto them, *Is* he well?

And they said, *He* is well: and, behold, Rachel his daughter cometh with the sheep.

<sup>7</sup>And he said, Lo, *it is* yet high day, neither *is it* time that the cattle should be gathered together: water ye the sheep, and go *and feed them*.

<sup>8</sup>And they said, We cannot, until all the flocks be gathered together, and *till* they roll the stone from the well's mouth; then we water the sheep.

<sup>9</sup>And while he yet spake with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep: for she kept them. <sup>10</sup>And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother. <sup>11</sup>And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept. <sup>12</sup>And Jacob told Rachel that he *was* her father's brother, and that he *was* Rebekah's son: and she ran and told her father.

### *Jacob marries two sisters*

<sup>13</sup>And it came to pass, when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house. And he told Laban all these things. <sup>14</sup>And Laban said to him, Surely thou *art* my bone and my flesh. And he abode with him the space of a month.

<sup>15</sup>And Laban said unto Jacob, Because thou *art* my brother, shouldst thou therefore serve me for nought? tell me, what *shall* thy wages *be*? <sup>16</sup>And Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder *was* Leah, and the name of the younger *was* Rachel. <sup>17</sup>Leah *was* tender eyed; but Rachel *was* beautiful and well favoured.

<sup>18</sup>And Jacob loved Rachel; and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter.

<sup>19</sup>And Laban said, *It is* better that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man: abide with me. <sup>20</sup>And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him *but a few days*, for the love he had to her.

28:20 *raiment*: clothing. 29:15 *nought*: nothing.

**28:20–22** Was Jacob trying to bargain with God? It is possible that he, in his ignorance of how to worship and serve God, treated God like a servant who would perform a service for a tip. More likely, Jacob was not bargaining but pledging his future to God. He may have been saying, in effect, "Since you have blessed me, I will follow you." Whether Jacob was bargaining or pledging, God blessed him. But God also had some difficult lessons for Jacob to learn.

**29:18–27** It was the custom of the day for a man to present a dowry, or substantial gift, to the family of his future wife. This was to compensate the family for the loss of the girl. Jacob's dowry was not a material possession, for he had none to offer. Instead, he agreed to work seven years for Laban. But there was another custom of the land that Laban did not tell Jacob. The older daughter

had to be married first. By giving Jacob Leah and not Rachel, Laban tricked him into promising another seven years of hard work.

**29:20–28** People often wonder if waiting a long time for something they desire is worth it. Jacob waited seven years to marry Rachel. After being tricked, he agreed to work seven more years for her (although he did get to marry Rachel shortly after he married Leah). The most important goals and desires are worth working and waiting for. Movies and television have created the illusion that people have to wait only about an hour to solve their problems or get what they want. Don't be trapped into thinking the same is true in real life. Patience is hardest when we need it the most, but it is the key to achieving our goals.



<sup>21</sup>And Jacob said unto Laban, Give *me* my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in unto her. <sup>22</sup>And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast. <sup>23</sup>And it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him; and he went in unto her. <sup>24</sup>And Laban gave unto his daughter Leah Zilpah his maid *for* a handmaid. <sup>25</sup>And it came to pass, that in the morning, behold, it *was* Leah: and he said to Laban, What is this thou hast done unto me? did not I serve with thee for Rachel? wherefore then hast thou beguiled me?

**29:22**  
Judg 14:10  
**29:23**  
Gen 24:65; 38:14  
**29:24**  
Gen 30:9  
**29:25**  
Gen 12:18

<sup>26</sup>And Laban said, It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. <sup>27</sup>Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years.

**29:27**  
Judg 14:12

<sup>28</sup>And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week: and he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife also. <sup>29</sup>And Laban gave to Rachel his daughter Bilhah his handmaid to be her maid. <sup>30</sup>And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served with him yet seven other years.

**29:29**  
Gen 30:3  
**29:30**  
Gen 29:16

*Jacob's many sons*

<sup>31</sup>And when the LORD saw that Leah *was* hated, he opened her womb: but Rachel *was* barren. <sup>32</sup>And Leah conceived, and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben: for she said, Surely the LORD hath looked upon my affliction; now therefore my husband will love me. <sup>33</sup>And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Because the LORD hath heard that I *was* hated, he hath therefore given me this *son* also: and she called his name Simeon. <sup>34</sup>And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have born him three sons: therefore was his name called Levi. <sup>35</sup>And she conceived again, and bare a son: and she said, Now will I praise the LORD: therefore she called his name Judah; and left bearing.

**29:31**  
Deut 21:15-17  
**29:32**  
Gen 30:23; 37:21; 46:8  
**29:33**  
Deut 21:15  
**29:34**  
Gen 49:5  
**29:35**  
Gen 49:8  
Matt 1:2-3

**30** And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die.

**30:1**  
1 Sam 1:5-6

<sup>2</sup>And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel: and he said, *Am* I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?

**30:2**  
Gen 20:18; 29:31

<sup>3</sup>And she said, Behold my maid Bilhah, go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees, that I may also have children by her. <sup>4</sup>And she gave him Bilhah her handmaid to wife: and Jacob went in unto her. <sup>5</sup>And Bilhah conceived, and bare Jacob a son. <sup>6</sup>And Rachel said, God hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son: therefore called she his name Dan. <sup>7</sup>And Bilhah Rachel's maid conceived again, and bare Jacob a second son. <sup>8</sup>And Rachel said, With great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed: and she called his name Naphtali.

**30:3-4**  
Gen 16:2-4  
**30:6**  
Gen 30:23

<sup>9</sup>When Leah saw that she had left bearing, she took Zilpah her maid, and gave her Jacob to wife. <sup>10</sup>And Zilpah Leah's maid bare Jacob a son. <sup>11</sup>And Leah said, A troop cometh: and she called his name Gad. <sup>12</sup>And Zilpah Leah's maid bare Jacob a second son. <sup>13</sup>And Leah said, Happy am I, for the daughters will call me blessed: and she called his name Asher.

**30:8**  
Gen 32:28

**30:11**  
Gen 35:26; 46:16; 49:19

**29:25** *beguiled*: deceived. **29:34** *be joined*: become attached. **29:35** *left*: stopped. **30:9** *left*: stopped. **30:11** *troop*: fortune.

**29:23-25** Jacob flew into a rage when he learned that Laban had tricked him. The deceiver of Esau was now deceived himself. How natural it is for us to become enraged at an injustice done to us while closing our eyes to the injustice we do to others. Sin has a way of coming back to haunt us.

**29:28-30** Although Jacob was tricked by Laban, he kept his part of the bargain. There was more at stake than just Jacob's hurt. There was Rachel to think about, as well as God's plan for his life. When we are tricked by others, keeping our part of the bargain may still be wise. Nursing our wounds or plotting revenge makes us unable to see from God's perspective.

**29:32** Today parents usually give their children names that sound good or have sentimental appeal. But the Old Testament portrays a more dynamic use of names. Parents hoped their children would fulfill the meaning of the names given them. Later the parents could look back and see if their grown children had lived up to their names. Sometimes a person's name was changed because his or her character and name did not match. This happened to Jacob ("one who supplants"), whose name was changed to Israel

("a prince who prevails with God"). Jacob's character had changed to the point that he was no longer seen as a deceiver, but as a God-honoring man.

**30:3** Each of the three great patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) had wives who had difficulty conceiving children. It is interesting to note how each man reacted to his wife's predicament. Abraham had relations with Sarah's servant girl in order to have his own child, thus introducing bitterness and jealousy into his family. Isaac, by contrast, prayed to God when his wife was barren. God eventually answered his prayers, and Rebekah had twin sons. Jacob, however, followed his grandfather's example and had children by his wives' servant girls, leading to sad and sometimes bitter consequences.

**30:4-12** Rachel and Leah were locked in a cruel contest. In their race to have more children, they both gave their servant girls to Jacob as concubines. Jacob would have been wise to refuse, even though this was an accepted custom of the day. The fact that a custom is socially acceptable does not mean it is wise or right. You will be spared much heartbreak if you look at the potential



30:14  
Song 7:13

<sup>14</sup>And Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest, and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them unto his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, Give me, I pray thee, of thy son's mandrakes.

<sup>15</sup>And she said unto her, *Is it* a small matter that thou hast taken my husband? and wouldest thou take away my son's mandrakes also?

And Rachel said, Therefore he shall lie with thee to night for thy son's mandrakes.

<sup>16</sup>And Jacob came out of the field in the evening, and Leah went out to meet him, and said, Thou must come in unto me; for surely I have hired thee with my son's mandrakes. And he lay with her that night.

30:17  
Gen 25:21

<sup>17</sup>And God hearkened unto Leah, and she conceived, and bare Jacob the fifth son. <sup>18</sup>And Leah said, God hath given me my hire, because I have given my maiden to my husband: and she called his name Issachar. <sup>19</sup>And Leah conceived again, and bare Jacob the sixth son. <sup>20</sup>And Leah said, God hath ended me *with* a good dowry; now will my husband dwell with me, because I have born him six sons: and she called his name Zebulun. <sup>21</sup>And afterwards she bare a daughter, and called her name Dinah.

30:18  
Gen 49:14

30:22  
1 Sam 1:19-20

<sup>22</sup>And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb.



## RACHEL

History seems to repeat itself here. Twice a town well at Haran was the site of significant events in one family's story. It was here that Rebekah met Eliezer, Abraham's servant, who had come to find a wife for Isaac. Years later Rebekah's son Jacob returned the favor by serving his cousin Rachel and her sheep from the same well. The relationship that developed between them not only reminds us that romance is not a modern invention, but also teaches us a few lessons about patience and love.

Jacob's love for Rachel was both patient and practical. Jacob had the patience to wait seven years for her but he kept busy in the meantime. His commitment to Rachel kindled a strong loyalty within her. In fact, her loyalty to Jacob got out of hand and became self-destructive. She was frustrated by her barrenness and desperate to compete with her sister for Jacob's affection. She was trying to gain from Jacob what he had already given: devoted love.

Rachel's attempts to earn the unearnable are a picture of a much greater error we can make. Like her, we find ourselves trying somehow to earn love—God's love. But apart from his Word, we end up with one of two false ideas. Either we think we've been good enough to deserve his love or we recognize we aren't able to earn his love and assume that it cannot be ours. If the Bible makes no other point, it shouts this one: God loves us! His love had no beginning and is incredibly patient. All we need to do is respond, not try to earn what is freely offered. God has said in many ways, "I love you. I have demonstrated that love to you by all I've done for you. I have even sacrificed my Son, Jesus, to pay the price for what is unacceptable about you—your sin. Now, live because of my love. Respond to me; love me with your whole being; give yourself to me in thanksgiving, not as payment." Live life fully, in the freedom of knowing you are loved.

### Strengths and accomplishments:

- She showed great loyalty to her family
- She mothered Joseph and Benjamin after being barren for many years

### Weaknesses and mistakes:

- Her envy and competitiveness marred her relationship with her sister, Leah
- She was capable of dishonesty when she took her loyalty too far
- She failed to recognize that Jacob's devotion was not dependent on her ability to have children

### Lessons from her life:

- Loyalty must be controlled by what is true and right
- Love is accepted, not earned

### Vital statistics:

- Where: Haran
- Occupation: Shepherdess, wife, mother, household manager
- Relatives: Father: Laban. Aunt: Rebekah. Sister: Leah. Husband: Jacob. Sons: Joseph and Benjamin.

### Key verse:

"And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her" (Genesis 29:20).

Rachel's story is told in Genesis 29:1—35:20. She is also mentioned in Ruth 4:11.

consequences, to you or others, of your actions. Are you doing anything now that might cause future problems?

**30:22–24** Eventually the Lord answered Rachel's prayers and gave her a child of her own. In the meantime, however, she had taken matters into her own hands by giving her servant girl to

Jacob. Trusting God when nothing seems to happen is difficult. But it is harder still to live with the consequences of taking matters into our own hands. Resist the temptation to think God has forgotten you. Have patience and courage to wait for God to act.

<sup>23</sup>And she conceived, and bare a son; and said, God hath taken away my reproach: <sup>24</sup>and she called his name Joseph; and said, The LORD shall add to me another son.

**30:23**  
Luke 1:25  
**30:24**  
Gen 35:17

*Jacob becomes wealthy*

<sup>25</sup>And it came to pass, when Rachel had born Joseph, that Jacob said unto Laban, Send me away, that I may go unto mine own place, and to my country. <sup>26</sup>Give *me* my wives and my children, for whom I have served thee, and let me go: for thou knowest my service which I have done thee.

**30:26**  
Gen 29:18  
Hos 12:12

<sup>27</sup>And Laban said unto him, I pray thee, if I have found favour in thine eyes, *tarry: for* I have learned by experience that the LORD hath blessed me for thy sake. <sup>28</sup>And he said, Appoint me thy wages, and I will give it.

**30:27**  
Gen 18:3; 39:2-5  
**30:28**  
Gen 29:15; 31:7

<sup>29</sup>And he said unto him, Thou knowest how I have served thee, and how thy cattle was with me. <sup>30</sup>For *it was* little which thou hadst before I *came*, and it is *now* increased unto a multitude; and the LORD hath blessed thee since my coming: and now when shall I provide for mine own house also?

<sup>31</sup>And he said, What shall I give thee?

And Jacob said, Thou shalt not give me any thing: if thou wilt do this thing for me, I will again feed *and* keep thy flock. <sup>32</sup>I will pass through all thy flock today, removing from thence all the speckled and spotted cattle, and all the brown cattle among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats: and *of such* shall be my hire. <sup>33</sup>So shall my righteousness answer for me in time to come, when it shall come for my hire before thy face: every one that *is* not speckled and spotted among the goats, and brown among the sheep, that shall be counted stolen with me.

**30:32**  
Gen 31:8, 12

<sup>34</sup>And Laban said, Behold, I would it might be according to thy word. <sup>35</sup>And he removed that day the he goats that were ringstraked and spotted, and all the she goats that were speckled and spotted, *and* every one that had *some* white in it, and all the brown among the sheep, and gave *them* into the hand of his sons. <sup>36</sup>And he set three days' journey betwixt himself and Jacob: and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks.

<sup>37</sup>And Jacob took him rods of green poplar, and of the hazel and chestnut tree; and pilled white strakes in them, and made the white appear which *was* in the rods. <sup>38</sup>And he set the rods which he had pilled before the flocks in the gutters in the watering troughs when the flocks came to drink, that they should conceive when they came to drink. <sup>39</sup>And the flocks conceived before the rods, and brought forth cattle ringstraked, speckled, and spotted. <sup>40</sup>And Jacob did separate the lambs, and set the faces of the flocks toward the ringstraked, and all the brown in the flock of Laban; and he put his own flocks by themselves, and put them not unto Laban's cattle.

<sup>41</sup>And it came to pass, whensoever the stronger cattle did conceive, that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the cattle in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods. <sup>42</sup>But when the cattle were feeble, he put *them* not in: so the feebler were Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's. <sup>43</sup>And the man increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maid-servants, and menservants, and camels, and asses.

**30:43**  
Gen 13:2; 24:35;  
26:13

**2. Jacob returns home**

**31** And he heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, Jacob hath taken away all that *was* our father's; and of *that* which *was* our father's hath he gotten all this glory. <sup>2</sup>And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and, behold, it *was* not toward him as before. <sup>3</sup>And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee.

**31:3**  
Gen 28:15; 32:9

<sup>4</sup>And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field unto his flock, <sup>5</sup>and said unto them, I see your father's countenance, that it *is* not toward me as before; but the God of my father hath been with me. <sup>6</sup>And ye know that with all my power I have served your father.

**31:6**  
Gen 30:29

<sup>7</sup>And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him

**31:7**  
Gen 29:25; 31:41

**30:27** *tarry: stay.* **30:28** *appoint: name.* **30:35** *ringstraked: streaked.* **30:37** *pilled: pealed.* **31:7** *suffered: allowed.*

**31:1, 2** Jacob's wealth made Laban's sons jealous. It is sometimes difficult to be happy when others are doing better than we are. To compare our success with that of others is a dangerous way to judge the quality of our lives. By comparing ourselves to others, we may be giving jealousy a foothold. We can avoid jealousy by rejoicing in others' successes (see Romans 12:15).

**31:4-13** Although Laban treated Jacob unfairly, God still increased Jacob's prosperity. God's power is not limited by lack of fair play. He has the ability to meet our needs and make us thrive even though others mistreat us. To give in and respond unfairly in return is to be no different from your enemies.

31:8  
Gen 30:32

not to hurt me. <sup>8</sup>If he said thus, The speckled shall be thy wages; then all the cattle bare speckled: and if he said thus, The ringstraked shall be thy hire; then bare all the cattle ringstraked. <sup>9</sup>Thus God hath taken away the cattle of your father, and given *them* to me.

31:11  
Gen 16:7-11;  
22:11, 15

<sup>10</sup>And it came to pass at the time that the cattle conceived, that I lifted up mine eyes, and saw in a dream, and, behold, the rams which leaped upon the cattle *were* ringstraked, speckled, and grised. <sup>11</sup>And the angel of God spake unto me in a dream, *saying*, Jacob: And I said, Here *am* I. <sup>12</sup>And he said, Lift up now thine eyes, and see, all the rams which leap upon the cattle *are* ringstraked, speckled, and grised: for I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee.

31:12  
Gen 30:32  
Exod 3:7

<sup>13</sup>I *am* the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, *and* where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred.

31:13  
Gen 28:10-22

<sup>14</sup>And Rachel and Leah answered and said unto him, *Is there* yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? <sup>15</sup>Are we not counted of him strangers? for he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money. <sup>16</sup>For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that *is* ours, and our children's: now then, whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do.

31:15  
Gen 29:20, 27

*Laban pursues Jacob*

31:18  
Gen 25:20

<sup>17</sup>Then Jacob rose up, and set his sons and his wives upon camels; <sup>18</sup>and he carried away all his cattle, and all his goods which he had gotten, the cattle of his getting, which he had gotten in Padan-aram, for to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan. <sup>19</sup>And Laban went to shear his sheep: and Rachel had stolen the images that *were* her father's. <sup>20</sup>And Jacob stole away unawares to Laban the Syrian, in that he told him not that he fled. <sup>21</sup>So he fled with all that he had; and he rose up, and passed over the river, and set his face *toward* the mount Gilead.

31:19  
Judg 17:5

31:20  
Gen 31:27

31:21  
Gen 37:25  
Num 32:1

<sup>22</sup>And it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob was fled. <sup>23</sup>And he took his brethren with him, and pursued after him seven days' journey; and they overtook him in the mount Gilead. <sup>24</sup>And God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said unto him, Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad.

31:22  
Gen 30:36

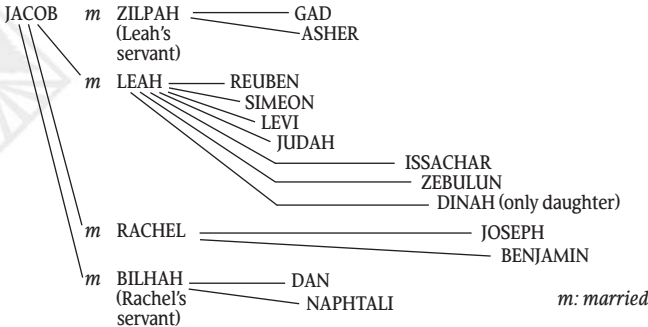
31:24  
Gen 25:20

<sup>25</sup>Then Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mount: and Laban with his brethren pitched in the mount of Gilead. <sup>26</sup>And Laban said to Jacob, What hast thou done, that thou hast stolen away unawares to me, and carried away my daughters, as captives

31:10 *grised*: mottled. 31:19 *images*: idols.

**JACOB'S CHILDREN**

This chart shows from left to right Jacob's children in the order in which they were born.



Jacob's many wives (two wives and two "substitute" wives) led to sad and bitter consequences among the children. Anger, resentment, and jealousy were common among Jacob's sons. It is interesting to note that the worst fighting and rivalry occurred between Leah's children and Rachel's children, and among the tribes that descended from them.

**31:14, 15** Leaving home was not difficult for Rachel and Leah because their father had treated them as poorly as he had Jacob. According to custom, they were supposed to receive the benefits of the dowry Jacob paid for them, which was 14 years of hard work. When Laban did not give them what was rightfully theirs, they knew they would never inherit anything from their father. Thus they wholeheartedly approved of Jacob's plan to take the wealth he had gained and leave.

**31:19** Many people kept small wooden or metal idols in their homes. These idols were called *teraphim*, and they were thought

to protect the home and offer advice in times of need. They had legal significance as well, for when they were passed on to an heir, the person who received them could rightfully claim the greatest part of the family inheritance. No wonder Laban was concerned when he realized his idols were missing (31:30). Most likely Rachel stole her father's idols because she was afraid Laban would consult them and learn where she and Jacob had gone, or perhaps she wanted to claim the family inheritance.

taken with the sword? <sup>27</sup>Wherefore didst thou flee away secretly, and steal away from me; and didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth, and with songs, with tabret, and with harp? <sup>28</sup>And hast not suffered me to kiss my sons and my daughters? thou hast now done foolishly in so doing. <sup>29</sup>It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt: but the God of your father spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take thou heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad. <sup>30</sup>And now, *though* thou wouldst needs be gone, because thou sore longedst after thy father's house, *yet* wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?

31:28  
Gen 31:55

<sup>31</sup>And Jacob answered and said to Laban, Because I was afraid: for I said, Peradventure thou wouldst take by force thy daughters from me. <sup>32</sup>With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, let him not live: before our brethren discern thou what is thine with me, and take it to thee. For Jacob knew not that Rachel had stolen them.

31:31  
Gen 20:11  
31:32  
Gen 44:9

<sup>33</sup>And Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into the two maidservants' tents; but he found *them* not. Then went he out of Leah's tent, and entered into Rachel's tent. <sup>34</sup>Now Rachel had taken the images, and put them in the camel's furniture, and sat upon them. And Laban searched all the tent, but found *them* not. <sup>35</sup>And she said to her father, Let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise up before thee; for the custom of women is upon me. And he searched, but found not the images.

<sup>36</sup>And Jacob was wroth, and chode with Laban: and Jacob answered and said to Laban, What is my trespass? what is my sin, that thou hast so hotly pursued after me? <sup>37</sup>Whereas thou hast searched all my stuff, what hast thou found of all thy household stuff? set it here before my brethren and thy brethren, that they may judge betwixt us both. <sup>38</sup>This twenty years *have I been* with thee; thy ewes and thy she goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten. <sup>39</sup>That which was torn *of beasts* I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, *whether* stolen by day, or stolen by night. <sup>40</sup>Thus I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes. <sup>41</sup>Thus have I been twenty years in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle: and thou hast changed my wages ten times. <sup>42</sup>Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty. God hath seen mine affliction and the labour of my hands, and rebuked *thee* yesternight.

31:37  
Gen 31:33

31:38  
Gen 27:44

31:39  
Exod 22:10-13

31:41  
Gen 29:30

31:42  
Gen 29:32

<sup>43</sup>And Laban answered and said unto Jacob, *These* daughters *are* my daughters, and *these* children *are* my children, and *these* cattle *are* my cattle, and all that thou seest *is* mine: and what can I do this day unto these my daughters, or unto their children which they have born? <sup>44</sup>Now therefore come thou, let us make a covenant, I and thou; and let it be for a witness between me and thee.

31:44  
Gen 21:27, 30

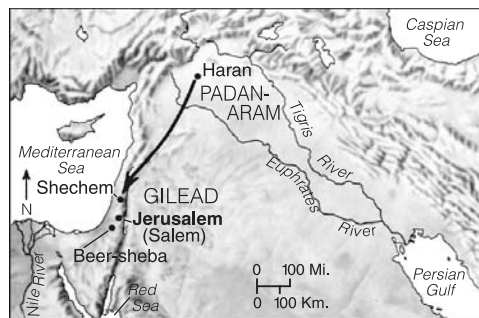
<sup>45</sup>And Jacob took a stone, and set it up *for* a pillar. <sup>46</sup>And Jacob said unto his brethren, Gather stones; and they took stones, and made an heap: and they did eat there upon the heap. <sup>47</sup>And Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha: but Jacob called it Gilead. <sup>48</sup>And Laban said, This heap *is* a witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called

31:45  
Gen 28:18  
Josh 24:26-27  
31:48  
Gen 21:30

31:27 mirth: joy. tabret: tambourine. 31:28 suffered: allowed. 31:31 peradventure: perhaps. 31:34 furniture: saddle. 31:36 wrath: angry. chode: rebuked. 31:37 betwixt: between.

**31:32** Can you remember feeling absolutely sure about something? Jacob was so sure that no one had stolen Laban's idols that he vowed to kill the offender. Since Rachel took them, this statement put her safety in serious jeopardy. Even when you are absolutely sure about a matter, avoid rash statements. Someone may hold you to them.

**31:38-42** Jacob made it a habit to do more than was expected of him. When his flocks were attacked, he took the losses rather than splitting them with Laban. He worked hard even after several pay cuts. His diligence eventually paid off; his flocks began to multiply. Making a habit of doing more than expected can pay off. It (1) pleases God, (2) earns recognition and advancement, (3) enhances your reputation, (4) builds others' confidence in you, (5) gives you more experience and knowledge, and (6) develops your spiritual maturity.



**JACOB'S RETURN TO CANAAN** God told Jacob to leave Haran and return to his homeland. Jacob took his family, crossed the Euphrates River, and headed first for the land of Gilead. Laban caught up with him there.

**31:49**  
Judg 10:17; 11:29  
**31:50**  
Judg 11:10  
1 Sam 12:5  
Jer 29:23; 42:5  
**31:52**  
Gen 31:29, 42  
**31:53**  
Gen 24:12  
**31:54**  
Exod 18:12  
**31:55**  
Gen 31:28

Galeed;<sup>49</sup>and Mizpah; for he said, The LORD watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another.<sup>50</sup>If thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take *other* wives beside my daughters, no man is with us; see, God is witness betwixt me and thee.

<sup>51</sup>And Laban said to Jacob, Behold this heap, and behold *this* pillar, which I have cast betwixt me and thee;<sup>52</sup>this heap *be* witness, and *this* pillar *be* witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me, for harm.<sup>53</sup>The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge betwixt us. And Jacob sware by the fear of his father Isaac.<sup>54</sup>Then Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount, and called his brethren to eat bread: and they did eat bread, and tarried all night in the mount.<sup>55</sup>And early in the morning Laban rose up, and kissed his sons and his daughters, and blessed them: and Laban departed, and returned unto his place.

*Jacob takes gifts to Esau*

**32** And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him.<sup>2</sup>And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim.

<sup>3</sup>And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom.<sup>4</sup>And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau; Thy servant Jacob saith thus, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now:<sup>5</sup>and I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and menservants, and womenservants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight.

**31:54** *tarried*: stayed.

**32:1**  
Gen 16:11  
2 Kgs 6:16-17  
**32:2**  
Josh 13:26; 21:38  
2 Sam 2:8  
**32:3**  
Gen 27:41-42  
**32:4**  
Gen 31:41



LABAN

We're all selfish, but some of us have a real corner on the market. Laban's whole life was stamped by self-centeredness. His chief goal was to look out for himself. He made profitable arrangements for his sister Rebekah's marriage to Isaac and used his daughters' lives as bargaining chips. Jacob eventually outmaneuvered Laban, but the older man was unwilling to admit defeat. His hold on Jacob was broken, but he still tried to maintain some kind of control by getting Jacob to promise to be gone for good. He realized that Jacob and Jacob's God were more than he could handle.

On the surface, we may find it difficult to identify with Laban. But his selfishness is one point we have in common. Like him, we often have a strong tendency to control people and events to our benefit. Our "good" reasons for treating others the way we do may simply be a thin cover on our self-centered motives. We may not even recognize our own selfishness. One way to discover it is to examine our willingness to admit we're wrong. Laban could not bring himself to do this. If you ever amaze yourself by what you say and do to avoid facing up to wrong actions, you are getting a glimpse of your selfishness in action. Recognizing selfishness is painful, but it is the first step on the road back to God.

**Strengths and accomplishments:**

- Controlled two generations of marriages in the Abrahamic family
- Quick-witted

**Weaknesses and mistakes:**

- Manipulated others for his own benefit
- Unwilling to admit wrongdoing
- Benefited financially by using Jacob but never fully benefited spiritually by knowing and worshiping Jacob's God

**Lessons from his life:**

- Those who set out to use people will eventually find themselves used
- God's plan cannot be blocked

**Vital statistics:**

- Where: Haran
- Occupation: Wealthy sheep breeder
- Relatives: Father: Bethuel. Sister: Rebekah. Brother-in-law: Isaac. Daughters: Rachel and Leah. Son-in-law: Jacob.

**Key verse:**

"Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty. God hath seen mine affliction and the labour of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight" (Genesis 31:42).

Laban's story is told in Genesis 24:1—31:55.

**31:49** To be binding, an agreement had to be witnessed by a third party. In this case, Jacob and Laban used God as their witness that they would keep their word.

**32:1** Why did angels of God meet Jacob? In Bible times, angels often intervened in human situations. Although angels usually would appear in human form, these angels must have looked different, for Jacob recognized them at once. The reason these

angels met Jacob is unclear, but because of their visit, Jacob knew God was with him.

**32:3** The last time Jacob had seen Esau, his older brother had been ready to kill him for stealing the family blessing (25:29—27:42). Esau was so angry he had vowed to kill Jacob as soon as their father Isaac died (27:41). Fearing their reunion, Jacob sent a messenger ahead with gifts. He hoped to buy Esau's favor.



<sup>6</sup>And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him. <sup>7</sup>Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed: and he divided the people that *was* with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands; <sup>8</sup>and said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape.

32:7  
Gen 33:1

<sup>9</sup>And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee: <sup>10</sup>I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands. <sup>11</sup>Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, *and* the mother with the children. <sup>12</sup>And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.

32:9  
Gen 28:13-15;  
31:13

32:10  
Gen 24:27

32:11  
Gen 27:41

32:12  
Gen 28:14

<sup>13</sup>And he lodged there that same night; and took of that which came to his hand a present for Esau his brother; <sup>14</sup>two hundred she goats, and twenty he goats, two hundred ewes, and twenty rams, <sup>15</sup>thirty milch camels with their colts, forty kine, and ten bulls, twenty she asses, and ten foals. <sup>16</sup>And he delivered *them* into the hand of his servants, every drove by themselves; and said unto his servants, Pass over before me, and put a space betwixt drove and drove. <sup>17</sup>And he commanded the foremost, saying, When Esau my brother meeteth thee, and asketh thee, saying, Whose *art* thou? and whither goest thou? and whose *are* these before thee? <sup>18</sup>Then thou shalt say, *They be* thy servant Jacob's; it is a present sent unto my lord Esau: and, behold, also he is behind us. <sup>19</sup>And so commanded he the second, and the third, and all that followed the droves, saying, On this manner shall ye speak unto Esau, when ye find him. <sup>20</sup>And say ye moreover, Behold, thy servant Jacob is behind us. For he said, I will appease him with the present that goeth before me, and afterward I will see his face; peradventure he will accept of me. <sup>21</sup>So went the present over before him: and himself lodged that night in the company.

32:18  
Gen 32:13

32:20  
1 Sam 25:19

*Jacob wrestles with an angel*

<sup>22</sup>And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two womenservants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok. <sup>23</sup>And he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over that he had. <sup>24</sup>And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. <sup>25</sup>And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. <sup>26</sup>And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh.

32:22  
Deut 3:16  
Josh 12:2

32:24  
Gen 18:2

32:26  
Hos 12:3-4

And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.

<sup>27</sup>And he said unto him, What *is* thy name?

And he said, Jacob.

<sup>28</sup>And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

32:28  
Gen 35:10  
1 Kgs 18:31

<sup>29</sup>And Jacob asked *him*, and said, Tell *me*, I pray thee, thy name.

32:29  
Exod 3:13  
Judg 13:17

And he said, Wherefore *is it that* thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there.

<sup>30</sup>And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. <sup>31</sup>And as he passed over Penuel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh. <sup>32</sup>Therefore the children of Israel eat not *of* the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank.

32:30  
Gen 16:13  
Exod 24:10; 33:20  
Num 12:8  
Deut 5:24; 34:10  
Judg 6:22  
John 1:18

32:31  
Judg 8:8-9

32:8 *smite*: attacks. 32:10 *bands*: large groups. 32:15 *milch*: milk. *kine*: cows. *foals*: male donkeys. 32:16 *betwixt*: between. *drove*: group. 32:20 *peradventure*: perhaps. 32:22 *ford*: river. 32:32 *sinew*: muscle.

**32:9–12** How would you feel if you knew you were about to meet the person you had cheated out of his most precious possession? Jacob had taken Esau's birthright (25:33) and his blessing (27:27–40). Now he was about to meet his brother for the first time in 20 years, and he was frantic with fear. He collected his thoughts, however, and decided to pray. When we

face a difficult conflict, we can run about frantically or we can pause to pray. Which approach will be more effective?

**32:26** Jacob continued this wrestling match all night just to be blessed. He was persistent. God encourages persistence in all areas of our lives, including the spiritual. Where in your spiritual life do you need more persistence? Strong character results from struggling under tough conditions.

**32:27–29** God gave many Bible people new names (Abraham, Sarah, Peter). Their new names were a symbol of how God had changed their lives. Here we see how Jacob's character had changed. Jacob, the ambitious deceiver, became Israel, the prince who struggles with God and prevails.



*The brothers make peace*

33:1  
Gen 32:6-7

**33** And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids. <sup>2</sup>And he put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindermost. <sup>3</sup>And he passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

33:3  
Gen 18:2; 42:6

33:2 *foremost*: in front. *hindermost*: behind.



LEAH

Leah lived in a blunt and painful world. She observed it with sad eyes. Women in her day were considered property. Daughters were traded by their fathers in business deals. Leah's father Laban gave her to a man who did not love her. Perhaps it would be more fair to say that Jacob didn't love her as much as he loved her younger sister Rachel. But God loved her.

Leah apparently could not see very well, but her sister looked great! In fact, Jacob agreed to work seven years for Rachel's hand in marriage. Jacob kept his end of the contract, but Laban deceived his future son-in-law. He substituted Leah for Rachel under the wedding veil. By the time Jacob knew a switch had been made, he was already married. Laban excused his deception by citing a local custom that a younger daughter could not marry ahead of an older one. After a brief confrontation, Laban agreed to give Rachel to Jacob in exchange for another seven years of work. And although Leah was not his first choice, Jacob accepted her as his wife.

Leah revealed how she felt toward Jacob in the name she gave their first son, Reuben. The name expressed her desire to be noticed by her husband. Because Leah and Rachel competed for Jacob's attention, there was constant friction in the family. They measured their worth against each other by their ability to bear children. Leah was winning the fertility contest handily when Rachel died bearing her second child, Benjamin. Leah's victory carried little satisfaction. The Scriptures mention no more children born to Jacob. Ironically, the greatest honor Jacob finally gave Leah was to bury her with his parents and grandparents in the cave at Machpelah (Genesis 49:31).

When we fail to live at peace with the important people in our lives, we leave behind a tragic story. Although God loved Leah, we are not told of her response to him. Her inability to appreciate God's love also made her unable to love others. When we struggle to love others, we can be helped by reflecting on the fact that God loves us. If God's love doesn't free us, we need to think again!

**Strengths and accomplishments:**

- Bore Jacob six sons and one daughter
- Collaborated with Jacob and Rachel to outwit Laban's ruthless manipulation
- She is honored as one of the mothers of Israel (Ruth 4:11)

**Weaknesses and mistakes:**

- Envied her sister Rachel over Jacob's love
- Competed with Rachel for Jacob's attention and respect

**Lessons from her life:**

- Even wrong motives can't entirely cover the truth—Leah gave God specific credit in the birth of five of her sons
- Opportunities for joy can be missed through wrong motives toward others
- God has a way of using unexpected people to accomplish his purposes and plans

**Vital statistics:**

- Where: Padan-aram
- Occupation: Wife and mother
- Relatives: Father: Laban. Husband: Jacob. Daughter: Dinah. Sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun.

**Key verse:**

"And Leah said, God hath endued me with a good dowry; now will my husband dwell with me, because I have born him six sons: and she called his name Zebulun" (Genesis 30:20).

Leah's story is told in Genesis 29—35. She is also mentioned in Genesis 46:15, 18, 31 and Ruth 4:11.

**33:1–11** Jacob must have been amazed to see Esau's change of heart when the two brothers met again (33:10). Esau was no longer bitter over losing his birthright and blessing (27:36–41); instead, he was content with what he had.

Life can deal us some bad situations. We can feel cheated, as Esau did, but we don't have to remain bitter. We can remove bitterness from our lives by honestly expressing our feelings to God, forgiving those who have wronged us, and being content with what we have.

**33:3** Bowing low seven times was the sign of respect given to a king. Jacob was taking every precaution as he met Esau, hoping to dispel any thoughts of revenge.

<sup>4</sup>And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept. <sup>5</sup>And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children; and said, Who *are* those with thee?

**33:4**  
Gen 45:14-15  
**33:5**  
Gen 48:9

And he said, The children which God hath graciously given thy servant. <sup>6</sup>Then the handmaidens came near, they and their children, and they bowed themselves. <sup>7</sup>And Leah also with her children came near, and bowed themselves: and after came Joseph near and Rachel, and they bowed themselves.

<sup>8</sup>And he said, What *meanest* thou by all this drove which I met?

**33:8**  
Gen 32:14-16

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

<sup>9</sup>And Esau said, I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself.

**33:9**  
Gen 27:39

<sup>10</sup>And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand: for therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me. <sup>11</sup>Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee; because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough. And he urged him, and he took *it*.

<sup>12</sup>And he said, Let us take our journey, and let us go, and I will go before thee.

<sup>13</sup>And he said unto him, My lord knoweth that the children *are* tender, and the flocks and herds with young *are* with me: and if men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die. <sup>14</sup>Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant: and I will lead on softly, according as the cattle that goeth before me and the children be able to endure, until I come unto my lord unto Seir.

**33:14**  
Gen 32:3

<sup>15</sup>And Esau said, Let me now leave with thee *some* of the folk that *are* with me.

And he said, What needeth it? let me find grace in the sight of my lord. <sup>16</sup>So Esau returned that day on his way unto Seir. <sup>17</sup>And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built him an house, and made booths for his cattle: therefore the name of the place is called Succoth.

**33:17**  
Judg 8:5, 14  
Ps 60:6

<sup>18</sup>And Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, which *is* in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan-aram; and pitched his tent before the city. <sup>19</sup>And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for an hundred pieces of money. <sup>20</sup>And he erected there an altar, and called it Elohe-Israelael.

**33:18**  
Gen 12:6; 25:20  
**33:19**  
Josh 24:32  
John 4:5

*Jacob's sons take revenge*

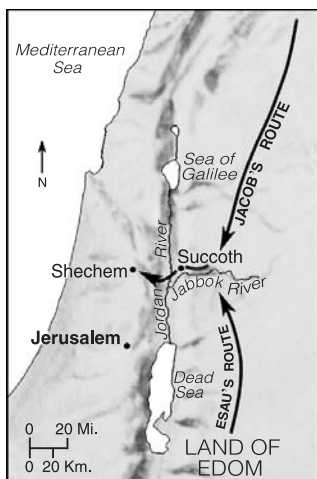
**34** And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. <sup>2</sup>And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her. <sup>3</sup>And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly unto the damsel. <sup>4</sup>And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife.

**34:1**  
Gen 30:21  
**34:2**  
Deut 21:14  
2 Sam 13:14  
**34:4**  
Gen 21:21

**33:8** drove: group. **34:3** clave: was strongly attracted.

**JACOB'S JOURNEY TO SHECHEM**

After a joyful reunion with his brother Esau (who journeyed from Edom), Jacob set up camp in Succoth. Later he moved on to Shechem where his daughter, Dinah, was raped and two of his sons took revenge on the city.



**33:4** Esau greeted his brother, Jacob, with a great hug. Imagine how hard this must have been for a man who once had actually plotted his brother's death (27:41). But time away from each other allowed the bitter wounds to heal. With the passing of time, each brother was able to see that their relationship was more important than their real estate.

**33:11** Why did Jacob send gifts ahead for Esau? In Bible times, gifts were given for several reasons. (1) This may have been a bribe. Gifts are still given to win someone over or buy his or her support. Esau may first have refused Jacob's gifts (33:9) because he didn't want or need a bribe. He had already forgiven Jacob, and he had ample wealth of his own. (2) This may have been an expression of affection. (3) It may have been the customary way of greeting someone before an important meeting. Such gifts were often related to a person's occupation. This explains why Jacob sent Esau, who was a herdsman, sheep, goats, and cattle.

**34:1-4** Shechem may have been a victim of "love at first sight," but his actions were impulsive and evil. Not only did he sin against Dinah, he sinned against the entire family (34:6, 7). The consequences of his deed were severe both for his family and for Jacob's (34:25-31). Even Shechem's declared love for Dinah could not excuse the evil he did by raping her. Don't allow sexual passion to boil over into evil actions. Passion must be controlled.

34:7  
2 Sam 13:12

<sup>5</sup>And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter: now his sons were with his cattle in the field: and Jacob held his peace until they were come. <sup>6</sup>And Hamor the father of Shechem went out unto Jacob to commune with him. <sup>7</sup>And the sons of Jacob came out of the field when they heard *it*: and the men were grieved, and they were very wroth, because he had wrought folly in Israel in lying with Jacob's daughter; which thing ought not to be done. <sup>8</sup>And Hamor communed with them, saying, The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter: I pray you give her him to wife. <sup>9</sup>And make ye marriages with us, *and* give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you. <sup>10</sup>And ye shall dwell with us: and the land shall be before you; dwell and trade ye therein, and get you possessions therein.

34:10  
Gen 33:19

<sup>11</sup>And Shechem said unto her father and unto her brethren, Let me find grace in your eyes, and what ye shall say unto me I will give. <sup>12</sup>Ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me: but give me the damsel to wife.

34:12  
Exod 22:16

34:13  
Gen 27:36

34:14  
Gen 17:14

<sup>13</sup>And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully, and said, because he had defiled Dinah their sister: <sup>14</sup>and they said unto them, We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised; for that *were* a reproach unto us: <sup>15</sup>but in this will we consent unto you: If ye will be as we *be*, that every male of you be circumcised; <sup>16</sup>then will we give our daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people. <sup>17</sup>But if ye will not hearken unto us, to be circumcised; then will we take our daughter, and we will be gone.

34:19  
Gen 29:20

<sup>18</sup>And their words pleased Hamor, and Shechem Hamor's son. <sup>19</sup>And the young man deferred not to do the thing, because he had delight in Jacob's daughter: and he *was* more honourable than all the house of his father.

34:7 *wroth*: angry. 34:8 *communed*: spoke.



DINAH

As far as we know, Dinah was Jacob's only daughter. She lived among ten older and two younger brothers. She grew up in a family rocked by struggle between two sisters married to the same man. Dinah's mother, Leah, knew that Jacob loved her sister and rival Rachel. We don't know how the bitterness and jealousy between these women affected the only girl-child in the family. By the time Dinah was a teenager, her family was living in Shechem, a town north of Bethel and Jerusalem in the Promised Land.

Apparently no one really paid much attention to Dinah until she went out for a walk in town one day. She was noticed and raped by Shechem, the son of the ruler of the city. Violated and shamed, Dinah found herself in the center of a family crisis. Shechem asked his father to arrange a marriage with Dinah. But in Jacob's and his sons' eyes, Dinah had been damaged and their family had been insulted. Jacob failed to provide any fatherly leadership in this situation and his sons took matters into their own hands. The results were treacherous and bloody.

In all of this, the victim was overlooked. Dinah was neither comforted nor consulted. Instead, she was treated with almost as much disrespect by her family as she had been by Shechem. By handing her over to Shechem, they used Dinah as bait in a trap that led to the murder of all the men in the village. Dinah's brothers profited from the massacre of Shechem. Jacob was angry at his sons for their actions, but did nothing. Meanwhile, Dinah slipped back into oblivion. Her story reminds us of the tragedies that occur when family members are careless with each other. Someone ends up paying a high price.

You probably know someone who can identify closely with Dinah. Perhaps you have experienced that same anonymity as a victim who was unnoticed or forgotten. Remember several glimmers of hope: Even when everyone else forgets, God doesn't; when no one seems to notice, God sees; when no one seems to care, God cares; when you feel all alone, you aren't. And one of the first lessons God will teach you as you depend on him is that there are others who also care and are willing to help. Begin to speak to God today in prayer about your past.

**Strength and accomplishment:**

- Jacob's only daughter

**Lessons from her life:**

- Thoughtless avengers often hurt the original victims a second time
- Family members can be trampled in the rush for family honor

**Vital statistics:**

- Where: Padan-aram
- Relatives: Father: Jacob. Mother: Leah. Twelve brothers. Aunt: Rachel. Grandparents: Isaac and Rebekah, Laban. Uncle: Esau.

**Key verse:**

"And afterwards she bare a daughter, and called her name Dinah" (Genesis 30:21).

Dinah's story is told in Genesis 34. Her birth is mentioned in Genesis 30:21; she is last mentioned in Genesis 46:15.

<sup>20</sup>And Hamor and Shechem his son came unto the gate of their city, and communed with the men of their city, saying, <sup>21</sup>These men *are* peaceable with us; therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; for the land, behold, *it is* large enough for them; let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters. <sup>22</sup>Only herein will the men consent unto us for to dwell with us, to be one people, if every male among us be circumcised, as they *are* circumcised. <sup>23</sup>*Shall* not their cattle and their substance and every beast of theirs *be* ours? only let us consent unto them, and they will dwell with us. <sup>24</sup>And unto Hamor and unto Shechem his son hearkened all that went out of the gate of his city; and every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city.

**34:20**  
Gen 18:1

**34:22**  
Gen 34:15

**34:24**  
Gen 28:15

<sup>25</sup>And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males. <sup>26</sup>And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went out. <sup>27</sup>The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister. <sup>28</sup>They took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which *was* in the city, and that which *was* in the field, <sup>29</sup>and all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives took they captive, and spoiled even all that *was* in the house.

**34:25**  
Gen 49:5-7  
Josh 5:8

**34:28**  
Gen 43:18

<sup>30</sup>And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and I *being* few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house.

**34:30**  
Gen 13:7; 49:5-7  
Exod 5:21  
2 Sam 10:6  
1 Chr 16:19

<sup>31</sup>And they said, Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?

*Rachel and Isaac die*

**35** And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother.

**35:1**  
Gen 12:8; 28:19

<sup>2</sup>Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that *were* with him, Put away the strange gods that *are* among you, and be clean, and change your garments: <sup>3</sup>and let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. <sup>4</sup>And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which *were* in their hand, and *all their* earrings which *were* in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which *was* by Shechem.

**35:2**  
Gen 31:19  
**35:3**  
Gen 28:15-22  
**35:4**  
Exod 32:3  
Judg 8:24  
Hos 2:13

**34:20** *communed*: spoke.

**34:25-31** Why did Simeon and Levi take such harsh action against the city of Shechem? Jacob's family saw themselves as set apart from others. God wanted them to remain separate from their heathen neighbors. But the brothers wrongly thought that being set apart also meant being better. This

arrogant attitude led to the terrible slaughter of innocent people.

**34:27-29** When Shechem raped Dinah, the consequences were far greater than he could have imagined. Dinah's brothers were outraged and took revenge. Pain, deceit, and murder followed. Sexual sin is no more sinful than any other sin, but its consequences may be especially devastating.

**34:30, 31** In seeking revenge against Shechem, Simeon and Levi lied, stole, and murdered. Their desire for justice was right, but their ways of achieving it were wrong. Because of their sin, their father cursed them with his dying breath (49:5-7). Generations later, their descendants lost the part of the Promised Land allotted to them. When tempted to return evil for evil, leave revenge to God and spare yourself the dreadful consequences of sin.

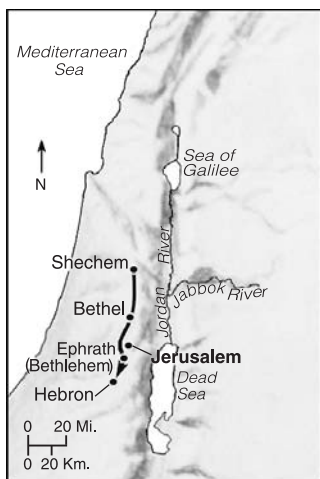
**35:2** Why did the people have these idols? Idols were sometimes seen more as good luck charms than as gods. Some Israelites, even though they worshiped God, had idols in their homes, just as some Christians today own good luck trinkets. Jacob believed that idols should have no place in his household. He wanted nothing to divert his family's spiritual focus.

Jacob ordered his household to destroy all their idols. Unless we remove idols from our lives, they can ruin our faith. What idols do we have? An idol is anything we put before God. Idols don't have to be physical objects; they can be thoughts or desires. Like Jacob, we should get rid of anything that could stand between us and God.

**35:4** Why did people give Jacob their earrings? Jewelry in itself was not evil, but in Jacob's day earrings were often worn as good

**JACOB'S JOURNEY BACK TO HEBRON**

After Jacob's sons Simeon and Levi destroyed Shechem, God told Jacob to move to Bethel where God reminded him that his name had been changed to Israel. He then traveled to Hebron, but along the way his dear wife Rachel died near Ephrath (Bethlehem).



**35:5**  
Exod 15:16

**35:6**  
Gen 28:19

**35:7**  
Gen 28:19

**35:8**  
Gen 24:59

**35:9**  
Gen 28:13

**35:10**  
Gen 32:28

**35:11**  
Gen 12:2; 17:1, 6

**35:12**  
Gen 13:15; 28:13

**35:13**  
Judg 6:21; 13:20

**35:14**  
Gen 28:18-19

**35:16**  
Ruth 4:11

**35:17**  
Gen 30:22-24

**35:18**  
Gen 49:27

**35:19**  
Gen 48:7

**35:22**  
Gen 49:4

Lev 18:8  
1 Chr 5:1

**35:23-26**  
/1 Chr 2:1-2

**35:23**  
Gen 29:31-35;  
30:18-20

**35:24**  
Gen 30:24

**35:25**  
Gen 30:5-8

**35:26**  
Gen 30:10-13

**35:27**  
Gen 13:18; 23:2

**35:28**  
Gen 25:7-8, 20

**36:1**  
Gen 25:30

**36:2**  
Gen 26:34  
1 Chr 1:40

**36:3**  
Gen 25:13

**36:4**  
1 Chr 1:35

<sup>5</sup>And they journeyed: and the terror of God was upon the cities that *were* round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob. <sup>6</sup>So Jacob came to Luz, which *is* in the land of Canaan, that *is*, Bethel, he and all the people that *were* with him. <sup>7</sup>And he built there an altar, and called the place El-bethel: because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother. <sup>8</sup>But Deborah Rebekah's nurse died, and she was buried beneath Bethel under an oak: and the name of it was called Allon-bachuth.

<sup>9</sup>And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padan-aram, and blessed him. <sup>10</sup>And God said unto him, Thy name *is* Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel. <sup>11</sup>And God said unto him, I *am* God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; <sup>12</sup>and the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land. <sup>13</sup>And God went up from him in the place where he talked with him. <sup>14</sup>And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, *even* a pillar of stone: and he poured a drink offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon. <sup>15</sup>And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, Bethel.

<sup>16</sup>And they journeyed from Bethel; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour. <sup>17</sup>And it came to pass, when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also. <sup>18</sup>And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Ben-oni: but his father called him Benjamin. <sup>19</sup>And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which *is* Bethlehem. <sup>20</sup>And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave: that *is* the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day.

<sup>21</sup>And Israel journeyed, and spread his tent beyond the tower of Edar. <sup>22</sup>And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine: and Israel heard *it*.

Now the sons of Jacob were twelve: <sup>23</sup>the sons of Leah; Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, and Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Zebulun: <sup>24</sup>the sons of Rachel; Joseph, and Benjamin: <sup>25</sup>and the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid; Dan, and Naphtali: <sup>26</sup>and the sons of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid; Gad, and Asher: these *are* the sons of Jacob, which were born to him in Padan-aram.

<sup>27</sup>And Jacob came unto Isaac his father unto Mamre, unto the city of Arbah, which *is* Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac sojourned. <sup>28</sup>And the days of Isaac were an hundred and fourscore years. <sup>29</sup>And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people, *being* old and full of days: and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

### *Esau's descendants*

**36** Now these *are* the generations of Esau, who *is* Edom. <sup>2</sup>Esau took his wives of the daughters of Canaan; Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite; <sup>3</sup>and Bashemath Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nebajoth. <sup>4</sup>And Adah bare to Esau Eliphaz; and Bashemath bare Reuel; <sup>5</sup>and Aholibamah bare Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah: these *are* the sons of Esau, which were born unto him in the land of Canaan.

**35:11** *loins*: body. **35:27** *sojourned*: lived. **35:29** *gave up the ghost*: breathed his last.

luck charms to ward off evil. The people in his family had to cleanse themselves of all heathen influence including reminders of foreign gods.

**35:10** God reminded Jacob of his new name, Israel, which meant "a prince who prevails with God." Although Jacob's life was littered with difficulties and trials, his new name was a tribute to his desire to stay close to God despite life's disappointments.

Many people believe that Christianity should offer a problem-free life. Consequently, as life gets tough, they draw back disappointed. Instead, they should determine to prevail with God through life's storms. Problems and difficulties are painful but inevitable; you might as well see them as opportunities for growth. You can't prevail with God unless you have troubles to prevail over.

**35:13, 14** Anointing oil was olive oil of the finest grade of purity. It was expensive, so using it showed the high value placed on the anointed object. Jacob was showing the greatest respect for the place where he had met with God.

**35:18** *Ben-oni* means "son of my sorrow." *Benjamin* means "son of my right hand."

**35:22** Reuben's sin was costly, although not immediate. As the oldest son, he stood to receive a double portion of the family inheritance and a place of leadership among his people. Reuben may have thought he had gotten away with his sin. No more is mentioned of it until Jacob, on his deathbed, assembled his family for the final blessing. Suddenly Jacob took away Reuben's double portion and gave it to someone else. The reason? "Thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it" (49:4).

Sin's consequences can plague us long after the sin is committed. When we do something wrong we may think we can escape unnoticed, only to discover later that the sin has been quietly breeding serious consequences.



<sup>6</sup>And Esau took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the persons of his house, and his cattle, and all his beasts, and all his substance, which he had got in the land of Canaan; and went into the country from the face of his brother Jacob. <sup>7</sup>For their riches were more than that they might dwell together; and the land wherein they were strangers could not bear them because of their cattle. <sup>8</sup>Thus dwelt Esau in mount Seir: Esau is Edom.

**36:7**  
Gen 13:6  
**36:8**  
Gen 14:6; 25:30  
**36:9**  
Gen 36:43  
**36:10-14**  
#1 Chr 1:35-37

<sup>9</sup>And these *are* the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites in mount Seir: <sup>10</sup>these *are* the names of Esau's sons; Eliphaz the son of Adah the wife of Esau, Reuel the son of Basemath the wife of Esau. <sup>11</sup>And the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, and Gatam, and Kenaz.

<sup>12</sup>And Timna was concubine to Eliphaz Esau's son; and she bare to Eliphaz Amalek: these *were* the sons of Adah Esau's wife.

<sup>13</sup>And these *are* the sons of Reuel; Nahath, and Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah: these were the sons of Basemath Esau's wife.

<sup>14</sup>And these were the sons of Aholibamah, the daughter of Anah the daughter of Zibeon, Esau's wife: and she bare to Esau Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah.

<sup>15</sup>These *were* dukes of the sons of Esau: the sons of Eliphaz the firstborn *son* of Esau; duke Teman, duke Omar, duke Zepho, duke Kenaz, <sup>16</sup>duke Korah, duke Gatam, *and* duke Amalek: these *are* the dukes *that came* of Eliphaz in the land of Edom; these *were* the sons of Adah.

<sup>17</sup>And these *are* the sons of Reuel Esau's son; duke Nahath, duke Zerah, duke Shammah, duke Mizzah: these *are* the dukes *that came* of Reuel in the land of Edom; these *are* the sons of Basemath Esau's wife.

<sup>18</sup>And these *are* the sons of Aholibamah Esau's wife; duke Jeush, duke Jaalam, duke Korah: these *were* the dukes *that came* of Aholibamah the daughter of Anah, Esau's wife. <sup>19</sup>These *are* the sons of Esau, who *is* Edom, and these *are* their dukes.

**36:19**  
1 Chr 1:35  
**36:20-28**  
#1 Chr 1:38-42

<sup>20</sup>These *are* the sons of Seir the Horite, who inhabited the land; Lotan, and Shobal, and Zibeon, and Anah, <sup>21</sup>and Dishon, and Ezer, and Dishan: these *are* the dukes of the Horites, the children of Seir in the land of Edom.

<sup>22</sup>And the children of Lotan were Hori and Hemam; and Lotan's sister *was* Timna.

<sup>23</sup>And the children of Shobal *were* these; Alvan, and Manahath, and Ebal, Shepho, and Onam.

<sup>24</sup>And these *are* the children of Zibeon; both Ajah, and Anah: this *was that* Anah that found the mules in the wilderness, as he fed the asses of Zibeon his father. <sup>25</sup>And the children of Anah *were* these; Dishon, and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah.

**36:20**  
Gen 14:6  
Deut 2:12, 22

<sup>26</sup>And these *are* the children of Dishon; Hemdan, and Esh-ban, and Ithran, and Cheran.

<sup>27</sup>The children of Ezer *are* these; Bilhan, and Zaavan, and Akan. <sup>28</sup>The children of Dishan *are* these; Uz, and Aran.

**36:27**  
1 Chr 1:38, 42

<sup>29</sup>These *are* the dukes *that came* of the Horites; duke Lotan, duke Shobal, duke Zibeon, duke Anah, <sup>30</sup>duke Dishon, duke Ezer, duke Dishan: these *are* the dukes *that came* of Hori, among their dukes in the land of Seir.

**36:29-30**  
Gen 36:20

<sup>31</sup>And these *are* the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel. <sup>32</sup>And Bela the son of Beor reigned in Edom: and the name of his city *was* Dinhabah. <sup>33</sup>And Bela died, and Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his stead. <sup>34</sup>And Jobab died, and Husham of the land of Temani reigned in his stead. <sup>35</sup>And Husham died, and Hadad the son of Bedad, who smote Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his stead: and the name of his city *was* Avith. <sup>36</sup>And Hadad died, and Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his stead. <sup>37</sup>And Samlah died, and Saul of Rehoboth *by* the river reigned in his stead. <sup>38</sup>And Saul died, and Baal-hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his stead. <sup>39</sup>And Baal-hanan the son of Achbor died, and Hadar reigned in his stead: and the name of his city *was* Pau; and his wife's name *was* Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab.

**36:31-43**  
#1 Chr 1:43-54

**36:15** dukes: leaders. **36:35** smote: attacked.

**36:9** The Edomites were descendants of Esau, who lived south and east of the Dead Sea. The country featured rugged mountains and desolate wilderness. Several major roads led through Edom, for it was rich in natural resources. During the Exodus, God told Israel to leave the Edomites alone (Deuteronomy 2:4, 5) because

they were "brethren." But Edom refused to let them enter the land, and later they became bitter enemies of King David. The nations of Edom and Israel shared the same ancestor, Isaac, and the same border. Israel looked down on the Edomites because they had intermarried with the Canaanites.

**36:15ff** The title "duke" is equivalent to "head of the clan."



<sup>40</sup>And these *are* the names of the dukes *that came* of Esau, according to their families, after their places, by their names; duke Timnah, duke Alvah, duke Jetheth, <sup>41</sup>duke Aholibamah, duke Elah, duke Pinon, <sup>42</sup>duke Kenaz, duke Teman, duke Mibzar, <sup>43</sup>duke Magdiel, duke Iram: these *be* the dukes of Edom, according to their habitations in the land of their possession: he *is* Esau the father of the Edomites.

### G. THE STORY OF JOSEPH (37:1—50:26)

Joseph, one of Jacob's twelve sons, was obviously the favorite. Hated by his brothers for this, Joseph was sold to slave traders only to emerge as ruler of all Egypt. Through Joseph, we learn how suffering, no matter how unfair, develops strong character and deep wisdom.

#### 1. Joseph is sold into slavery

**37** And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan. <sup>2</sup>These *are* the generations of Jacob.

Joseph, *being* seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad *was* with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report.

<sup>3</sup>Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he *was* the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of *many* colours. <sup>4</sup>And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.

37:1  
Gen 17:8; 28:4

37:2  
Gen 35:22-26;  
41:46

37:3  
Gen 37:23, 32;  
44:20

37:4  
Gen 27:41



JOSEPH

As a youngster, Joseph was overconfident. His natural self-assurance, increased by being Jacob's favorite son and by knowing of God's designs on his life, was unbearable to his ten older brothers, who eventually conspired against him. But this self-assurance, molded by pain and combined with a personal knowledge of God, allowed him to survive and prosper where most would have failed. He added quiet wisdom to his confidence and won the hearts of everyone he met—Potiphar, the jailer, other prisoners, the pharaoh, and after many years, even those ten brothers.

Perhaps you can identify with one or more of these hardships Joseph experienced: He was betrayed and deserted by his family, exposed to sexual temptation, and punished for doing the right thing; he endured a long imprisonment and was forgotten by those he helped. As you read his story, note what Joseph did in each case. His positive response transformed each setback into a step forward. He didn't spend much time asking "Why?" His approach was "What shall I do now?" Those who met Joseph were aware that wherever he went and whatever he did, God was with him. When you're facing a setback, the beginning of a Joseph-like attitude is to acknowledge that God is with you. There is nothing like his presence to shed new light on a dark situation.

#### Strengths and accomplishments:

- Rose in power from slave to ruler of Egypt
- Was known for his personal integrity
- Was a man of spiritual sensitivity
- Prepared a nation to survive a famine

#### Weakness and mistake:

- His youthful pride caused friction with his brothers

#### Lessons from his life:

- What matters is not so much the events or circumstances of life, but your response to them
- With God's help, any situation can be used for good, even when others intend it for evil

#### Vital statistics:

- Where: Canaan, Egypt
- Occupation: Shepherd, slave, convict, ruler
- Relatives: Parents: Jacob and Rachel. Eleven brothers and one sister named in the Bible. Wife: Asenath. Sons: Manasseh and Ephraim.

#### Key verse:

"And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?" (Genesis 41:38).

Joseph's story is told in Genesis 30—50. He is also mentioned in Hebrews 11:22.

**37:3** In Joseph's day, everyone had a coat, or cloak. Cloaks were used for warmth, to bundle up belongings for a trip, to wrap babies, to sit on, or even to serve as security for a loan. Most cloaks were knee length, short sleeved, and plain. In contrast, Joseph's coat was probably of the kind worn by royalty—long sleeved, ankle length, and colorful. The coat

became a symbol of Jacob's favoritism toward Joseph, and it aggravated the already strained relations between Joseph and his brothers. Favoritism in families may be unavoidable, but its divisive effects should be minimized. Parents may not be able to change their feelings toward a favorite child, but they can change their actions toward the others.

<sup>5</sup>And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told *it* his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. <sup>6</sup>And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: <sup>7</sup>for, behold, we *were* binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf.

**37:5**  
Gen 28:12  
Num 12:6  
Dan 2:1

<sup>8</sup>And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.

**37:7**  
Gen 42:6, 9; 43:26

<sup>9</sup>And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.

**37:8**  
Deut 33:16

<sup>10</sup>And he told *it* to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What *is* this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? <sup>11</sup>And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying.

**37:10**  
Gen 27:29

<sup>12</sup>And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. <sup>13</sup>And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed *the flock* in Shechem? come, and I will send thee unto them.

**37:11**  
Luke 2:19, 51  
Acts 7:9

And he said to him, Here *am I*.

**37:13**  
Gen 33:19

<sup>14</sup>And he said to him, Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.

**37:14**  
Gen 35:27

<sup>15</sup>And a certain man found him, and, behold, *he was* wandering in the field: and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou?

<sup>16</sup>And he said, I seek my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they feed *their flocks*.

<sup>17</sup>And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan.

**37:17**  
2 Kgs 6:13

<sup>18</sup>And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him. <sup>19</sup>And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh. <sup>20</sup>Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.

**37:20**  
Gen 37:33

<sup>21</sup>And Reuben heard *it*, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him. <sup>22</sup>And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, *but* cast him into this pit that *is* in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again.

**37:21**  
Gen 42:22

**37:22**  
Gen 37:29

<sup>23</sup>And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stripped Joseph out of his coat, *his coat of many colours that was* on him; <sup>24</sup>and they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit *was empty, there was* no water in it.

**37:23**  
Gen 37:3

**37:24**  
Jer 38:6; 41:7

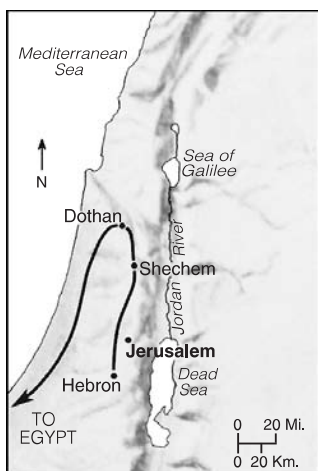
<sup>25</sup>And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry *it* down to Egypt. <sup>26</sup>And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit *is it*

**37:25**  
Gen 31:21; 37:28  
Jer 8:22; 46:11

**37:7** made obeisance: bowed low. **37:11** observed: kept in mind. **37:14** vale: valley.

**JOSEPH GOES TO MEET HIS BROTHERS**

Jacob asked Joseph to go find his brothers, who were grazing their flocks near Shechem. When Joseph arrived, he learned that his brothers had gone on to Dothan, which lay along a major trade route to Egypt. There the jealous brothers sold Joseph as a slave to a group of Ishmaelite traders on their way to Egypt.



**37:6–11** Joseph's brothers were already angry over the possibility of being ruled by their little brother. Joseph then fueled the fire with his immature attitude and boastful manner. No one enjoys a braggart. Joseph learned this the hard way. His angry brothers sold him into slavery to get rid of him. After several years of hardship, Joseph learned an important lesson: Because our talents and knowledge come from God, it is more appropriate to thank him for them than to brag about them (41:16). Later Joseph gave God the credit (41:16).

**37:19, 20** Could jealousy ever make you feel like killing someone? Before saying, "Of course not," look at what happened in this story. Ten men were willing to kill their brother over a coat and because of his dreams. Their deep jealousy had grown into ugly rage, blinding them completely to what was right. Jealousy can be hard to recognize, because our reasons for it seem to make sense. But left unchecked, jealousy grows quickly and leads to serious sins. The longer you cultivate jealous feelings, the harder it is to uproot them. The time to deal with jealousy is when you notice yourself keeping score of others' recognition, awards, and achievements.

**37:26, 27** The brothers were worried about bearing the guilt of Joseph's death. Judah suggested an option that was not right, but would leave them innocent of murder. Sometimes we jump at

**37:28**  
Gen 39:1; 45:4-5  
Lev 27:5  
Judg 8:22-24  
Acts 7:9

**37:29**  
Gen 37:34; 44:13  
Num 14:6

**37:30**  
Gen 42:13, 36

**37:32**  
Luke 15:30

**37:33**  
Gen 37:20; 44:28

**37:34**  
Gen 37:29

**37:35**  
Gen 44:29  
2 Sam 12:17  
Ps 77:2

if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? <sup>27</sup>Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother *and* our flesh. And his brethren were content. <sup>28</sup>Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty *pieces* of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.

<sup>29</sup>And Reuben returned unto the pit; and, behold, Joseph *was* not in the pit; and he rent his clothes. <sup>30</sup>And he returned unto his brethren, and said, The child *is* not; and I, whither shall I go?

<sup>31</sup>And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood; <sup>32</sup>and they sent the coat of *many* colours, and they brought *it* to their father; and said, This have we found: know now whether it *be* thy son's coat or no.

<sup>33</sup>And he knew it, and said, *It is* my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces. <sup>34</sup>And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. <sup>35</sup>And all his sons and all his daughters rose up

**37:29** rent: tore. **37:33** knew: recognized. **37:34** loins: body.



## REUBEN

Parents are usually the best judges of their children's character. Jacob summarized the personality of his son Reuben by comparing him to water. Except when frozen, water has no stable shape of its own. It always shapes itself to its container or environment. Reuben usually had good intentions, but he seemed unable to stand against a crowd. His instability made him hard to trust. He had both private and public values, but these contradicted each other. He went along with his brothers in their action against Joseph, while hoping to counteract the evil in private. The plan failed. Compromise has a way of destroying convictions. Without convictions, lack of direction will destroy life. Reuben's sleeping with his father's concubine showed how little he had left of the integrity he had displayed earlier in life.

How consistent are your public and private lives? We may want to think they are separate, but we can't deny that they affect each other. What convictions are present in your life at all times? How closely does Jacob's description of his son—"unstable as water"—describe your life?

### Strengths and accomplishments:

- Saved Joseph's life by talking the other brothers out of murder
- Showed intense love for his father by offering his own sons as a guarantee that Benjamin's life would be safe

### Weaknesses and mistakes:

- Gave in quickly to group pressure
- Did not directly protect Joseph from his brothers, although as eldest son he had the authority to do so
- Slept with his father's concubine

### Lessons from his life:

- Public and private integrity must be the same, or one will destroy the other
- Punishment for sin may not be immediate, but it is certain

### Vital statistics:

- Where: Canaan, Egypt
- Occupation: Shepherd
- Relatives: Parents: Jacob and Leah. Eleven brothers, one sister.

### Key verses:

"Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power: Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch" (Genesis 49:3, 4).

Reuben's story is told in Genesis 29—50.

a solution because it is the lesser of two evils but still is not the right action to take. When someone proposes a seemingly workable solution, first ask, "Is it right?"

**37:28** Although Joseph's brothers didn't kill him outright, they probably didn't expect him to survive for long as a slave. They were quite willing to let cruel slave traders do their dirty work for them. Joseph faced a 30-day journey through the desert, probably chained and on foot. He would be treated like baggage, and once in Egypt, would be sold as a piece of merchandise. His brothers thought they would never see him again. But God was in control of Joseph's life and had other plans.

**37:30** Reuben returned to the pit to find Joseph, but his little brother was gone. His first response, in effect, was "What is

going to happen to me?" ("Whither shall I go?") rather than "What is going to happen to Joseph?" In a tough situation, are you usually concerned first about yourself? Consider the person most affected by the problem, and you are more likely to find a solution for it.

**37:31–35** To cover their evil action, Jacob's sons deceived their father into thinking Joseph was dead. Jacob himself had deceived others many times (including his own father; 27:35). Even though he didn't know it at this point, Jacob was learning by hard experience the painfulness and destructive consequences of deceit.

**37:34** That Jacob "rent his clothes" means that he tore them. Tearing one's clothes and wearing sackcloth (rough cloth, like burlap) were signs of mourning, much like wearing black today.

to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him.

<sup>36</sup>And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, and captain of the guard.

**37:36**  
Gen 39:1; 40:3

**2. Judah and Tamar**

**38** And it came to pass at that time, that Judah went down from his brethren, and turned in to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah. <sup>2</sup>And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite, whose name was Shuah; and he took her, and went in unto her. <sup>3</sup>And she conceived, and bare a son; and he called his name Er. <sup>4</sup>And she conceived again, and bare a son; and she called his name Onan. <sup>5</sup>And she yet again conceived, and bare a son; and called his name Shelah: and he was at Chezib, when she bare him.

**38:1**  
Josh 15:35  
1 Sam 22:1

**38:2**  
Gen 24:3; 34:2;  
38:12

<sup>6</sup>And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, whose name was Tamar. <sup>7</sup>And Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD slew him. <sup>8</sup>And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother. <sup>9</sup>And Onan knew that the seed should not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in unto his brother's wife, that he spilled it on the ground, lest that he should give seed to his brother. <sup>10</sup>And the thing which he did displeased the LORD: wherefore he slew him also.

**38:3**  
Gen 46:12  
Num 26:19

**38:6**  
Matt 1:3

**38:7**  
Gen 6:5; 13:13;  
19:13; 38:10  
1 Chr 2:3

<sup>11</sup>Then said Judah to Tamar his daughter in law, Remain a widow at thy father's house, till Shelah my son be grown: for he said, Lest peradventure he die also, as his brethren did. And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.

**38:8**  
Lev 18:15  
Num 36:8  
Deut 25:5-10  
?Matt 22:24  
?Mark 12:19

<sup>12</sup>And in process of time the daughter of Shuah Judah's wife died; and Judah was comforted, and went up unto his sheepshearers to Timnath, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. <sup>13</sup>And it was told Tamar, saying, Behold thy father in law goeth up to Timnath to shear his sheep. <sup>14</sup>And she put her widow's garments off from her, and covered her with a veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place, which is by the way to Timnath; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given unto him to wife. <sup>15</sup>When Judah saw her, he thought her to be an harlot; because she had covered her face. <sup>16</sup>And he turned unto her by the way, and said, Go to, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee; (for he knew not that she was his daughter in law.)

**38:11**  
Ruth 1:13

**38:12**  
Gen 31:19  
Josh 15:10, 57

And she said, What wilt thou give me, that thou mayest come in unto me?

**38:14**  
Josh 15:34

**38:11** peradventure: perhaps.

**38:16**  
2 Sam 13:11

**37:36** Imagine the culture shock Joseph experienced upon arrival in Egypt. Joseph had lived as a nomad, traveling the countryside with his family, caring for sheep. Suddenly he was thrust into the world's most advanced civilization with great pyramids, beautiful homes, sophisticated people, and a new language. While Joseph saw Egypt's skill and intelligence at their best, he also saw the Egyptians' spiritual blindness. They worshiped countless gods related to every aspect of life.

**38:1ff** This chapter vividly portrays the immoral character of Judah in contrast to the moral character of Joseph. Judah's lack of integrity resulted in family strife and deception. Chapter 39 shows how Joseph's integrity and wise choices reflect his godly character. His faithfulness was rewarded with blessings greater than he could imagine, both for himself and for his family.

**38:8-10** This law about marrying a widow in the family is explained in Deuteronomy 25:5-10. Its purpose was to ensure that a childless widow would have a son who would receive her late husband's inheritance and who, in turn, would care for her. Because Judah's son (Tamar's husband) had no children, there was no family line through which the inheritance and the blessing of the covenant could continue. God killed Onan because he refused to fulfill his obligation to his brother and to Tamar.

**38:11-26** When Tamar revealed she was pregnant, Judah, who unknowingly had gotten her pregnant, moved to have her killed. Judah had concealed his own sin, yet he came down harshly on Tamar. Often the sins we try to cover up are the ones that anger us most when we see them in others. If you become indignant at the sins of others, you may have a similar tendency to sin that you don't wish to face. When we admit our sins and ask God to forgive us, forgiving others becomes easier.

**38:15-23** It may seem strange that prostitution is written about in such a matter-of-fact way here. Prostitutes were common in heathen cultures such as Canaan. Public prostitutes served heathen goddesses and were common elements of the religious cults. Public prostitutes were more highly respected than private prostitutes who were sometimes punished when caught. Tamar was driven to seduce Judah because of her intense desire to have children and to be the matriarch of Judah's line; Judah was driven by his lust. Neither case was justified.

**38:15-24** Why was Judah so open about his relations with a harlot, yet ready to execute his daughter-in-law for being one? To understand this apparent contradiction, we must understand the place of women in Canaan. A woman's most important function was bearing children who would perpetuate the family line. To ensure that children belonged to the husband, the bride was expected to be a virgin and the wife was expected to have relations only with him. If a wife committed adultery, she could be executed. Some women, however, did not belong to families. They might serve as temple prostitutes supported by offerings or common harlots supported by the men who used their services. Their children were nobody's heirs, and men who hired them adulterated no one's bloodlines.

Judah saw no harm in hiring a harlot for a night; after all, he was more than willing to pay. He was ready to execute Tamar, however, because if she was pregnant "by whoredom," his grandchild would not be part of his family line. Apparently, the question of sexual immorality never entered Judah's mind; his concern was for keeping his inheritance in the family. Ironically, it was Tamar, not Judah, who acted to provide him with legal heirs. By seducing him, she acted more in the spirit of the law than he did when he refused to send his third son to her.

38:17  
Gen 38:20

<sup>17</sup>And he said, I will send *thee* a kid from the flock.

And she said, Wilt thou give *me* a pledge, till thou send *it*?

38:18  
Gen 41:42  
Hos 4:11

<sup>18</sup>And he said, What pledge shall I give thee?

And she said, Thy signet, and thy bracelets, and thy staff that *is* in thine hand. And he gave *it* her, and came in unto her, and she conceived by him. <sup>19</sup>And she arose, and went away, and laid by her veil from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood.

<sup>20</sup>And Judah sent the kid by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive *his* pledge from the woman's hand: but he found her not. <sup>21</sup>Then he asked the men of that place, saying, Where *is* the harlot, that *was* openly by the way side?

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

<sup>22</sup>And he returned to Judah, and said, I cannot find her; and also the men of the place said, *that* there was no harlot in this *place*.

<sup>23</sup>And Judah said, Let her take *it* to her, lest we be shamed: behold, I sent this kid, and thou hast not found her.

38:24  
Lev 20:10; 21:9

<sup>24</sup>And it came to pass about three months after, that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter in law hath played the harlot; and also, behold, she *is* with child by whoredom.

And Judah said, Bring her forth, and let her be burnt.

<sup>25</sup>When she *was* brought forth, she sent to her father in law, saying, By the man, whose these *are*, *am* I with child: and she said, Discern, I pray thee, whose *are* these, the signet, and bracelets, and staff.

38:26  
1 Sam 24:17

<sup>26</sup>And Judah acknowledged *them*, and said, She hath been more righteous than I; because that I gave her not to Shelah my son. And he knew her again no more.

38:27  
Gen 25:24

<sup>27</sup>And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that, behold, twins *were* in her womb.

38:29  
Gen 46:12  
Num 26:20-21  
Ruth 4:12  
1 Chr 2:4  
Matt 1:3  
Luke 3:33

<sup>28</sup>And it came to pass, when she travailed, that *the one* put out *his* hand: and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This came out first. <sup>29</sup>And it came to pass, as he drew back his hand, that, behold, his brother came out: and she said, How hast thou broken forth? *this* breach *be* upon thee: therefore his name was called Pharez. <sup>30</sup>And afterward came out his brother, that had the scarlet thread upon his hand: and his name was called Zarah.

### 3. Joseph is thrown into jail

39:1  
Gen 37:25

**39** And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither. <sup>2</sup>And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. <sup>3</sup>And his master saw that the LORD *was*

39:2  
Acts 7:9

38:26 *knew*: lay with. 38:27 *travail*: giving birth.

#### WOMEN IN JESUS' FAMILY TREE

Tamar . . . . .	Canaanite . . . . .	Genesis 38:1–30
Rahab . . . . .	Canaanite . . . . .	Joshua 6:22–25
Ruth . . . . .	Moabite . . . . .	Ruth 4:13–22
Bath-sheba . . . . .	Israelite . . . . .	2 Samuel 12:24, 25

This event in no way implies that God thinks lightly of prostitution. Throughout Scripture, “harlotry” is condemned as a serious sin. If the story has a moral, it is that faithfulness to family obligations is important. Incidentally, Judah and Tamar were direct ancestors of Jesus Christ.

**38:18** A signet was a form of identification used to authenticate legal documents. Usually a unique design carved in stone and worn on a ring or necklace inseparable from its owner, it was used by the wealthy and powerful to mark clay or wax. Since Tamar had Judah's seal, she could prove beyond a doubt that he had been with her.

**39:1** The date of Joseph's arrival in Egypt is debatable. Many believe he arrived during the period of the Hyksos rulers, foreigners who came from the region of Canaan. They invaded Egypt and controlled the land for almost 150 years. If Joseph arrived during their rule, it is easy to see why he was rapidly promoted up the royal ladder. Since the Hyksos were foreigners themselves, they would not hold this brilliant young foreigner's ancestry against him.

**39:1** *Pharaoh* was the general name for all the kings of Egypt. It was a title like “King” or “Mr. President” used to address the country's leader. The pharaoh who placed Joseph in charge of Egypt was a different person from the pharaoh who turned against the Hebrews in the book of Exodus.

**39:1** Ancient Egypt was a land of great contrasts. People were either rich beyond measure or poverty stricken. There wasn't much middle ground. Joseph found himself serving Potiphar, an extremely rich officer in Pharaoh's service. Rich families like Potiphar's had elaborate homes two or three stories tall with beautiful gardens and balconies. They enjoyed live entertainment at home as they chose delicious fruit from expensive bowls. They surrounded themselves with alabaster vases, paintings, beautiful rugs, and hand-carved chairs. Dinner was served on golden tableware, and the rooms were lighted with gold candlesticks. Servants, like Joseph, worked on the first floor, while the family occupied the upper stories.



with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand. <sup>4</sup>And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all *that* he had he put into his hand. <sup>5</sup>And it came to pass from the time *that* he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field. <sup>6</sup>And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not aught he had, save the bread which he did eat.

And Joseph was a goodly *person*, and well favoured. <sup>7</sup>And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me.

<sup>8</sup>But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand; <sup>9</sup>*there is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*

<sup>10</sup>And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, *or* to be with her.

<sup>11</sup>And it came to pass about this time, that *Joseph* went into the house to do his business; and *there was* none of the men of the house there within. <sup>12</sup>And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out. <sup>13</sup>And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth, <sup>14</sup>that she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them, saying, See, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us; he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice: <sup>15</sup>and it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out.

<sup>16</sup>And she laid up his garment by her, until his lord came home. <sup>17</sup>And she spake unto him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant, which thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me: <sup>18</sup>and it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled out.

<sup>19</sup>And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled. <sup>20</sup>And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners *were* bound: and he was there in the prison. <sup>21</sup>But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. <sup>22</sup>And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that *were* in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer *of it*. <sup>23</sup>The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing *that was* under his hand; because the LORD was with him, and *that* which he did, the LORD made *it* to prosper.

*Joseph interprets two dreams*

**40** And it came to pass after these things, *that* the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker had offended their lord the king of Egypt. <sup>2</sup>And Pharaoh was wroth against two *of* his officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers. <sup>3</sup>And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph *was* bound. <sup>4</sup>And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them: and they continued a season in ward.

**39:6** *ought*: what. *save*: except. *goodly*: handsome. **39:8** *wotteth*: knows. **39:10** *hearkened*: listened. **40:2** *wroth*: angry. **40:3** *ward*: custody.

**39:4**  
Gen 40:4  
Prov 22:29  
**39:5**  
Deut 28:3-4, 11  
**39:6**  
1 Sam 16:12, 18  
Acts 7:20  
**39:7**  
Prov 7:15-20  
**39:8**  
Gen 39:4-5  
Prov 6:23-24  
**39:10**  
1 Thes 5:22  
**39:12**  
Prov 7:13  
2 Tim 2:22  
**39:17**  
Exod 20:16; 23:1  
Ps 55:3  
**39:20**  
Gen 40:1-3, 15;  
41:10  
Ps 105:18  
**39:21**  
Ps 105:19  
Acts 7:9  
**39:22**  
Gen 39:4  
**39:23**  
Gen 39:3

**40:1**  
Neh 1:11  
**40:4**  
Gen 37:36; 39:4

**39:9** Potiphar's wife failed to seduce Joseph, who resisted this temptation by saying it would be a sin against God. Joseph didn't say, "I'd be hurting you," or "I'd be sinning against Potiphar," or "I'd be sinning against myself." Under pressure, such excuses are easily rationalized away. Remember that sexual sin is not just between two consenting adults. It is an act of disobedience to God.

**39:10-15** Joseph avoided Potiphar's wife as much as possible. He refused her advances and finally *ran* from her. Sometimes merely trying to avoid temptation is not enough. We must turn and run from them, especially when the temptations seem very strong, as is often the case in sexual temptations.

**39:20** Prisons were grim places with vile conditions. They were used to house forced laborers or, like Joseph, the accused who were awaiting trial. In ancient days, prisoners were guilty until proven innocent, and there was no right to a speedy trial. Many prisoners never made it to court because trials were held at the

whim of the ruler. Joseph was in prison a long time before appearing before Pharaoh, and then he was called out to interpret a dream, not to stand trial.

**39:21-23** As a prisoner and slave, Joseph could have seen his situation as hopeless. Instead, he did his best with each small task given him. His diligence and positive attitude were soon noticed by the warden, who promoted him to prison administrator. Are you in the midst of a seemingly hopeless predicament? At work, at home, or at school, follow Joseph's example by taking each small task and doing your best. Remember how God turned Joseph's situation around. He will see your efforts and can reverse even overwhelming odds.

**40:1-3** The butler and the baker were two of the most trusted men in Pharaoh's kingdom. The baker was in charge of making the Pharaoh's food, and the butler tasted all of his food and drink before giving it to him, in case any of it was contaminated or



40:5  
Gen 20:3; 41:11

<sup>5</sup>And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream, the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, which *were* bound in the prison. <sup>6</sup>And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and looked upon them, and, behold, they *were* sad. <sup>7</sup>And he asked Pharaoh's officers that *were* with him in the ward of his lord's house, saying, Wherefore look ye so sadly today?

40:8  
Gen 41:15-16  
Dan 2:27-28

<sup>8</sup>And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and *there* is no interpreter of it.

And Joseph said unto them, *Do* not interpretations *belong* to God? tell me *them*, I pray you.

<sup>9</sup>And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, In my dream, behold, a vine *was* before me; <sup>10</sup>and in the vine *were* three branches: and it *was* as though it budded, and her blossoms shot forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes: <sup>11</sup>and Pharaoh's cup *was* in my hand: and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand.

40:12  
Gen 41:12

<sup>12</sup>And Joseph said unto him, This is the interpretation of it: The three branches *are* three



## POTIPHAR & HIS WIFE

Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh's royal guard, had a large household and a wife with too much time on her hands. One day he purchased Joseph from some Ishmaelite slave traders and put him to work in his home. This was the best decision Potiphar ever made. Joseph was not only talented; God was also with him. Because of Joseph, Potiphar began to prosper greatly.

While Potiphar was benefiting from Joseph's good work ethic, Potiphar's wife was noticing Joseph's good looks. She tried to seduce her young Hebrew servant, but Joseph continually resisted her advances. Denied the thrill of chasing and capturing her prey, of feeling a few moments of illicit pleasure, Potiphar's wife became angry and hurt. One day, after she had been scorned again, she accused Joseph of attempted rape. Consumed with selfish feelings, she wanted to punish Joseph.

Potiphar had Joseph thrown into prison. We don't know if he realized what was going on in his house, but he sided with his wife. Because he listened to a faithless woman, Potiphar jailed an innocent man and got rid of the best overseer in all of Egypt. Had Potiphar been more observant, he would have seen that Joseph was not merely an administrative windfall, he was also a young man of integrity. Perhaps he did see Joseph's character but didn't have enough himself to face the truth. In any case, Potiphar and his wife deserved each other.

We need to be careful that we are not guilty of over-emphasizing talent and under-emphasizing character. Both qualities are important, but character matters far more in the long run. Selfishness, faithlessness, and deceit have no place in a person who wants to develop character. Potiphar and his wife show us that anyone can be a judge of talent, but it takes insight and courage to be a judge of character.

### Strengths and accomplishments:

- Potiphar reached a high rank in Pharaoh's court
- Enjoyed the temporary blessing of having Joseph, God's servant, as their slave

### Weaknesses and mistakes:

- Neither recognized the amazing person who lived in their house
- Both failed in judging character—Potiphar toward his wife and Joseph, his wife toward Joseph
- Falsely accused and imprisoned Joseph, their faithful servant

### Lessons from their life:

- A lasting marriage requires faithfulness and hard work
- God can accomplish his purposes through other's mistakes and sins
- God blesses many people who clearly don't deserve his grace and help
- One person with character stands out among those who possess little of it

### Vital statistics:

- Where: Egypt
- Occupation: Palace official and wife

### Key verse:

"And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field" (Genesis 39:5).

The story of Potiphar and his wife is told in Genesis 37:36 and Genesis 39.

poisoned. These trusted men must have been suspected of a serious wrong, perhaps of conspiring against Pharaoh. Later the butler was released and the baker executed.

**40:8** When the subject of dreams came up, Joseph focused everyone's attention on God. Rather than using the situation to make

himself look good, he turned it into a powerful witness for God. One secret of effective witnessing is to recognize opportunities to relate God to the other person's experience. When the opportunity arises, we must have the courage to speak, as Joseph did.

days: <sup>13</sup>yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place: and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler. <sup>14</sup>But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness; I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house: <sup>15</sup>for indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews: and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon.

**40:13**  
Gen 40:19-20

**40:14**  
1 Sam 20:14

**40:15**  
Gen 37:26-28;  
39:20

<sup>16</sup>When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said unto Joseph, I also *was* in my dream, and, behold, *I had* three white baskets on my head: <sup>17</sup>and in the uppermost basket *there was* of all manner of bakemeats for Pharaoh; and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head.

**40:18**  
Gen 40:12

**40:19**  
Deut 21:22-23

<sup>18</sup>And Joseph answered and said, This *is* the interpretation thereof: The three baskets *are* three days: <sup>19</sup>yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee, and shall hang thee on a tree; and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee.

<sup>20</sup>And it came to pass the third day, *which was* Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast unto all his servants: and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants. <sup>21</sup>And he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand: <sup>22</sup>but he hanged the chief baker: as Joseph had interpreted to them. <sup>23</sup>Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him.

**40:22**  
Gen 40:19

**40:23**  
Gen 40:14

#### 4. Joseph is placed in charge of Egypt

##### *Pharaoh's strange dream*

**41** And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed: and, behold, he stood by the river. <sup>2</sup>And, behold, there came up out of the river seven well favoured kine and fatted; and they fed in a meadow. <sup>3</sup>And, behold, seven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill favoured and leanfleshed; and stood by the *other* kine upon the brink of the river. <sup>4</sup>And the ill favoured and leanfleshed kine did eat up the seven well favoured and fat kine. So Pharaoh awoke. <sup>5</sup>And he slept and dreamed the second time: and, behold, seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, rank and good. <sup>6</sup>And, behold, seven thin ears and blasted with the east wind sprung up after them. <sup>7</sup>And the seven thin ears devoured the seven rank and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and, behold, *it was* a dream. <sup>8</sup>And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dream; but *there was* none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh.

**41:2**  
Isa 19:6-7

**41:5**  
2 Kgs 4:42

**41:6**  
Ezek 19:12

**41:8**  
Exod 7:11-12  
Dan 2:1-3; 4:5-7

<sup>9</sup>Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day: <sup>10</sup>Pharaoh was wroth with his servants, and put me in ward in the captain of the guard's house, *both* me and the chief baker: <sup>11</sup>and we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he; we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream. <sup>12</sup>And *there was* there with us a young man, an Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams; to each man according to his dream he did interpret. <sup>13</sup>And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was; me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged.

**41:9**  
Gen 40:14

**41:10**  
Gen 40:2

**41:11**  
Gen 40:5

**41:12**  
Gen 40:12

**41:13**  
Gen 40:22

**41:14**  
Ps 105:20

**41:15**  
Dan 2:25

<sup>14</sup>Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon: and he shaved *himself*, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh. <sup>15</sup>And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and *there is* none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of thee, *that* thou canst understand a dream to interpret it.

<sup>16</sup>And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, *It is* not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.

**41:16**  
Gen 40:8

**41:2** kine: cows. **41:3** brink: bank. **41:5** rank: plump. **41:6** blasted: shriveled. **41:7** rank: plump. **41:10** wroth: angry. ward: custody. **41:14** raiment: clothing.

**40:23** When Pharaoh's butler was freed from prison, he forgot about Joseph. Two full years passed before Joseph had another opportunity to be freed (41:1). Yet Joseph's faith was deep, and he would be ready when the next chance came. When we feel passed by, overlooked, or forgotten, we shouldn't be surprised that people are often ungrateful. In similar situations, we should trust God as Joseph did. More opportunities may be waiting.

**41:8** Magicians and wise men were common in the palaces of ancient rulers. Their job description included studying sacred arts and sciences, reading the stars, interpreting dreams, predicting the future, and performing magic. These men had power (see Exodus 7:11, 12), but their power was satanic.

They were unable to interpret Pharaoh's dream, but God had revealed it to Joseph in prison.

**41:14** Our most important opportunities may come when we least expect them. Joseph was brought hastily from the dungeon and pushed before Pharaoh. Did he have time to prepare? Yes, and no. He had no warning that he would be suddenly pulled from prison and questioned by the king. Yet Joseph was ready for almost anything because of his right relationship with God. It was not Joseph's knowledge of dreams that helped him interpret their meaning. It was his knowledge of God. Be ready for opportunities by staying close to God. Then, when he calls you to a task, you'll be ready.

41:17  
Gen 41:1

<sup>17</sup>And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, In my dream, behold, I stood upon the bank of the river: <sup>18</sup>and, behold, there came up out of the river seven kine, fatfleshed and well favoured; and they fed in a meadow: <sup>19</sup>and, behold, seven other kine came up after them, poor and very ill favoured and leanfleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness: <sup>20</sup>and the lean and the ill favoured kine did eat up the first seven fat kine: <sup>21</sup>and when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had eaten them; but they *were* still ill favoured, as at the beginning. So I awoke. <sup>22</sup>And I saw in my dream, and, behold, seven ears came up in one stalk, full and good: <sup>23</sup>and, behold, seven ears, withered, thin, *and* blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them: <sup>24</sup>and the thin ears devoured the seven good ears: and I told *this* unto the magicians; but *there was* none that could declare *it* to me.

41:27  
2 Kgs 8:1

<sup>25</sup>And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh *is* one: God hath shewed Pharaoh what he *is* about to do. <sup>26</sup>The seven good kine *are* seven years; and the seven good ears *are* seven years: the dream *is* one. <sup>27</sup>And the seven thin and ill favoured kine that came up after them *are* seven years; and the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind shall be seven years of famine. <sup>28</sup>This *is* the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: What God *is* about to do he sheweth unto Pharaoh. <sup>29</sup>Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt: <sup>30</sup>and there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land; <sup>31</sup>and the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following; for it *shall be* very grievous. <sup>32</sup>And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; *it is* because the thing *is* established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.

41:29  
Gen 41:47

41:30  
Gen 47:13

41:33  
Gen 41:39

<sup>33</sup>Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. <sup>34</sup>Let Pharaoh do *this*, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. <sup>35</sup>And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. <sup>36</sup>And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine.

41:36  
Gen 47:14

#### *Joseph becomes ruler*

41:38  
Dan 4:8, 18;  
5:11, 14

<sup>37</sup>And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants. <sup>38</sup>And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find *such a one* as this *is*, a man in whom the Spirit of God *is*?

41:39  
Gen 41:33

41:40  
Gen 39:9  
Ps 105:21  
Acts 7:10

41:41  
Esth 8:2  
Dan 6:3

41:42  
Esth 3:10; 6:8

41:44  
Gen 45:8  
Ps 105:22

41:45  
Ezek 30:17

41:46  
Gen 37:2

<sup>39</sup>And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, *there is* none so discreet and wise as thou *art*: <sup>40</sup>Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. <sup>41</sup>And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.

<sup>42</sup>And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; <sup>43</sup>and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him *ruler* over all the land of Egypt. <sup>44</sup>And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I *am* Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt. <sup>45</sup>And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-paaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On. And Joseph went out over *all* the land of Egypt.

<sup>46</sup>And Joseph *was* thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt. <sup>47</sup>And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls. <sup>48</sup>And he gathered

41:23 *blasted*: shriveled. 41:24 *declare*: explain. 41:35 *corn*: grain. 41:42 *arrayed*: dressed. *vestures*: garments.

**41:28–36** After interpreting Pharaoh's dream, Joseph gave the king a survival plan for the next 14 years. The only way to prevent starvation was through careful planning; without a famine plan Egypt would have turned from prosperity to ruin. Many find detailed planning boring and unnecessary. But planning is a responsibility, not an option. Joseph was able to save a nation by translating God's plan for Egypt into practical actions.

**41:38** Pharaoh recognized that Joseph was a man "in whom the Spirit of God is." You probably won't get to interpret dreams for a king, but those who know you should be able to see God in you, through your kind words, merciful acts, and wise advice. Do your relatives, neighbors, and coworkers see you as a person in whom the Spirit of God is?

**41:39, 40** Joseph rose quickly to the top, from prison walls to Pharaoh's palace. His training for this important position involved being first a slave and then a prisoner. In each situation he learned the importance of serving God and others. Whatever your situation, no matter how undesirable, consider it part of your training program for serving God.

**41:45** Pharaoh may have been trying to acculturate Joseph by giving him an Egyptian name and wife. He probably wanted to (1) play down the fact that Joseph was a nomadic shepherd, an occupation disliked by the Egyptians, (2) make Joseph's name easier for Egyptians to pronounce and remember, and (3) show how highly he was honored by giving him the daughter of a prominent Egyptian official.

up all the food of the seven years, which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field, which *was* round about every city, laid he up in the same. <sup>49</sup>And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for *it was* without number.

<sup>50</sup>And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, which Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On bare unto him. <sup>51</sup>And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For God, *said he*, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house. <sup>52</sup>And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.

<sup>53</sup>And the seven years of plenteousness, that was in the land of Egypt, were ended. <sup>54</sup>And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said: and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. <sup>55</sup>And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do. <sup>56</sup>And the famine was over all the face of the earth: And Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt. <sup>57</sup>And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy *corn*; because that the famine was so sore in all lands.

**41:51**  
Gen 48:1  
Deut 33:17

**41:52**  
Gen 17:6

**41:54**  
Gen 41:30  
Ps 105:16  
Acts 7:11

**41:55**  
Gen 41:41

**41:57**  
Gen 42:5; 47:15  
Ps 105:16

### 5. Joseph and his brothers meet in Egypt

**42** Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another? <sup>2</sup>And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die.

<sup>3</sup>And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt. <sup>4</sup>But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren; for he said, Lest peradventure mischief befall him. <sup>5</sup>And the sons of Israel came to buy *corn* among those that came: for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

<sup>6</sup>And Joseph *was* the governor over the land, *and he it was* that sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him *with their faces* to the earth. <sup>7</sup>And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them; and he said unto them, Whence come ye?

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

<sup>8</sup>And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him. <sup>9</sup>And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye *are* spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.

<sup>10</sup>And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food *are* thy servants come. <sup>11</sup>We *are* all one man's sons; we *are* true *men*, thy servants are no spies.

<sup>12</sup>And he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.

<sup>13</sup>And they said, Thy servants *are* twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest *is* this day with our father, and one *is* not.

**42:1**  
Acts 7:12

**42:2**  
Gen 43:2, 4

**42:3**  
Gen 43:20

**42:4**  
Gen 35:24

**42:5**  
Gen 41:57  
Acts 7:11

**42:6**  
Ps 105:16-21

**42:7**  
Gen 42:30

**42:8**  
Gen 37:2

**42:9**  
Gen 42:16, 30-34

**42:10**  
Gen 37:6-9

**42:11**  
Gen 42:19, 31-34

**42:13**  
Gen 37:30-33;  
44:20; 46:31

**41:49** left numbering: stopped counting. **41:54** dearth: famine. **41:56** waxed sore: grew severe. **42:1** corn: grain. **42:4** peradventure: perhaps. **42:7** made himself strange: acted as a stranger. **42:11** true: honest.

**41:46** Joseph was 30 years old when he became governor of Egypt. At age 17, he had been sold into slavery by his brothers. Thus he had spent 13 years as an Egyptian slave and in prison.

**41:54** Famine was a catastrophe because ancient peoples relied almost exclusively on their own crops for food. Almost perfect conditions were needed to produce good crops because there were no chemical fertilizers or pesticides. Any variances in rainfall or insect activity could cause crop failure and great hunger. Lack of storage, refrigeration, or transportation turned a moderate famine into a desperate situation. The famine Joseph prepared for was described as "grievous" because seven years of famine came one right after the other. Without God's intervention, the Egyptian nation would have crumbled.

**42:1, 2** Why was corn or grain so valuable in those days? As a food source it was universal and used in nearly everything eaten.

It could be dried and stored much longer than any vegetables, milk products, or meat. It was so important that it was even used as money.

**42:4** Jacob was especially fond of Benjamin because he was Joseph's only full brother and—as far as Jacob knew—the only surviving son of his beloved wife, Rachel. Benjamin was Jacob's youngest son and a child of his old age.

**42:7** Joseph could have revealed his identity to his brothers at once. But Joseph's last memory of them may well have been staring in horror at their faces as slave traders carried him away. Were his brothers still evil and treacherous, or had they changed over the years? Joseph decided to put them through a few tests to find out.

**42:8, 9** Joseph remembered his dreams about his brothers bowing down to him (37:6–9). Those dreams were coming true. As a young boy, Joseph had been boastful about his dreams. As a man, he no longer flaunted his superior status. He did not feel the need to say, "I told you so." It was not yet time to reveal his identity, so he kept quiet. Sometimes it is best to remain quiet, even when we would like to have the last word.

42:14  
Gen 42:9

<sup>14</sup>And Joseph said unto them, *That is it* that I spake unto you, saying, *Ye are spies*: <sup>15</sup>Hereby ye shall be proved: By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither. <sup>16</sup>Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether *there be any* truth in you: or else by the life of Pharaoh surely ye *are* spies. <sup>17</sup>And he put them all together into ward three days.

42:17  
Gen 40:4

42:18  
Gen 20:11  
Lev 25:43

<sup>18</sup>And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live; *for I fear God*: <sup>19</sup>if ye *be* true *men*, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison: go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses: <sup>20</sup>but bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so.

42:20  
Gen 42:34; 43:15

42:21  
Gen 37:23-28;  
45:3-5

<sup>21</sup>And they said one to another, *We are verily* guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.

42:22  
Gen 9:5-6;  
37:21-22

42:24  
Gen 43:14, 23

<sup>22</sup>And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required. <sup>23</sup>And they knew not that Joseph understood *them*; for he spake unto them by an interpreter. <sup>24</sup>And he turned himself about from them, and wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes.

42:25  
Gen 44:1

<sup>25</sup>Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money unto his sack, and to give them provision for the way: and thus did he unto them. <sup>26</sup>And they laden their asses with the corn, and departed thence. <sup>27</sup>And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the inn, he espied his money; for, behold, it *was* in his sack's mouth. <sup>28</sup>And he said unto his brethren, My money is restored; and, lo, *it is* even in my sack: and their heart failed *them*, and they were afraid, saying one to another, What *is* this *that* God hath done unto us?

42:28  
Gen 43:23

42:30  
Gen 42:7

42:31  
Gen 42:11

42:32  
Gen 42:13

<sup>29</sup>And they came unto Jacob their father unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that befell unto them; saying, <sup>30</sup>The man, *who is* the lord of the land, spake roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country. <sup>31</sup>And we said unto him, *We are true men*; we are no spies: <sup>32</sup>we *be* twelve brethren, sons of our father; one *is* not, and the youngest *is* this day with our father in the land of Canaan. <sup>33</sup>And the man, the lord of the country, said unto us, Hereby shall I know that ye *are* true *men*; leave one of your brethren *here* with me, and take *food* for the famine of your households, and be gone: <sup>34</sup>and bring your youngest brother unto me: then shall I know that ye *are* no spies, but *that ye are* true *men*: so will I deliver you your brother, and ye shall traffick in the land.

42:34  
Gen 34:10

42:35  
Gen 43:12, 15, 18

42:36  
Gen 43:14;  
44:20-22

<sup>35</sup>And it came to pass as they emptied their sacks, that, behold, every man's bundle of money *was* in his sack: and when *both* they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid. <sup>36</sup>And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of *my children*: Joseph *is* not, and Simeon *is* not, and ye will take Benjamin *away*: all these things are against me.

42:37  
Gen 43:9; 44:32

42:38  
Gen 37:35;  
44:29, 34

<sup>37</sup>And Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again.

<sup>38</sup>And he said, My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

*Jacob lets Benjamin go*

43:1  
Gen 41:56-57

43:2  
Gen 42:25

43:3  
Gen 42:15; 44:23

**43** And the famine *was* sore in the land. <sup>2</sup>And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said unto them, Go again, buy us a little food.

<sup>3</sup>And Judah spake unto him, saying, The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother *be* with you. <sup>4</sup>If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food: <sup>5</sup>but if thou wilt not send *him*, we will not go down: for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother *be* with you.

42:17 ward: jail. 42:21 besought: pleaded with. 42:24 communed: talked. 42:26 laded: loaded. 42:27 provender: feed. espied: saw. 42:34 traffick: trade. 43:2 corn: grain.

42:15 Joseph was testing his brothers to make sure they had not been as cruel to Benjamin as they had been to him. Benjamin was his only full brother, and he wanted to see him face-to-face.

43:1 Jacob and his sons had no relief from the famine. They could not see God's overall plan of sending them to Egypt to be

reunited with Joseph and fed from Egypt's storehouses. If you are praying for relief from suffering or pressure and God is not bringing it as quickly as you would like, remember that God may be leading you to special treasures.



<sup>6</sup>And Israel said, Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me, *as* to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother?

<sup>7</sup>And they said, The man asked us straitly of our state, and of our kindred, saying, *Is* your father yet alive? have ye *another* brother? and we told him according to the tenor of these words: could we certainly know that he would say, Bring your brother down?

<sup>8</sup>And Judah said unto Israel his father, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, *and* also our little ones. <sup>9</sup>I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever: <sup>10</sup>for except we had lingered, surely now we had returned this second time.

<sup>11</sup>And their father Israel said unto them, *If it must be* so now, do this; take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds: <sup>12</sup>and take double money in your hand; and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry *it* again in your hand; peradventure it *was* an oversight: <sup>13</sup>take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man: <sup>14</sup>and God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved *of my children*, I am bereaved.

<sup>15</sup>And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph. <sup>16</sup>And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the ruler of his house, Bring *these* men home, and slay, and make ready; for *these* men shall dine with me at noon. <sup>17</sup>And the man did as Joseph bade; and the man brought the men into Joseph's house.

<sup>18</sup>And the men were afraid, because they were brought into Joseph's house; and they said, Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time are we brought in; that he may seek occasion against us, and fall upon us, and take us for bondmen, and our asses.

<sup>19</sup>And they came near to the steward of Joseph's house, and they communed with him at the door of the house, <sup>20</sup>and said, O sir, we came indeed down at the first time to buy food: <sup>21</sup>and it came to pass, when we came to the inn, that we opened our sacks, and, behold, *every* man's money *was* in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight: and we have brought it again in our hand. <sup>22</sup>And other money have we brought down in our hands to buy food: we cannot tell who put our money in our sacks.

<sup>23</sup>And he said, Peace *be* to you, fear not: your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money. And he brought Simeon out unto them.

<sup>24</sup>And the man brought the men into Joseph's house, and gave *them* water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their asses provender. <sup>25</sup>And they made ready the present against Joseph came at noon: for they heard that they should eat bread there.

<sup>26</sup>And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which *was* in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth. <sup>27</sup>And he asked them of *their* welfare, and said, *Is* your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? *Is* he yet alive?

<sup>28</sup>And they answered, Thy servant our father *is* in good health, he *is* yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance.

<sup>29</sup>And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, *Is* this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son. <sup>30</sup>And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought *where* to weep; and he entered into *his* chamber, and wept there. <sup>31</sup>And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread.

**43:7** *straitly*: specifically, *tenor*: meaning. **43:9** *surety*: the guarantee. **43:12** *peradventure*: perhaps. **43:16** *slay*: slaughter an animal. **43:17** *bade*: told. **43:19** *communed*: talked. **43:24** *provender*: feed. **43:28** *made obeisance*: bowed low. **43:30** *bowels did yearn*: heart was full of compassionate feelings. **43:31** *refrained*: controlled. *set on*: serve.

**43:7**  
Gen 42:13; 43:27

**43:8**  
Gen 42:2

**43:9**  
Gen 42:37  
Phlm 1:18-19

**43:11**  
Gen 32:13; 37:25

**43:12**  
Gen 42:25, 35

**43:13**  
Gen 43:3

**43:14**  
Gen 42:24  
Ps 106:46

**43:16**  
Gen 44:1

**43:18**  
Gen 42:28, 35

**43:21**  
Gen 42:25, 35;  
43:12

**43:22**  
Gen 42:28

**43:23**  
Gen 42:24

**43:24**  
Gen 18:4; 24:32

**43:27**  
Gen 43:7; 45:3

**43:28**  
Exod 18:7

**43:29**  
Num 6:25  
Ps 67:1

**43:30**  
Gen 42:24; 45:2,  
14-15; 46:29

**43:31**  
Gen 45:1

**43:9** Judah accepted full responsibility for Benjamin's safety. He did not know what that might mean for him, but he was determined to do his duty. In the end, Judah's stirring words caused Joseph to reveal himself to his brothers (44:18-34). Accepting responsibilities is difficult, but it builds character and confidence, earns others' respect, and motivates us to complete our work.

**43:11** These gifts of balm, honey, spices, myrrh, nuts, and almonds were highly valuable specialty items not common in Egypt. Because of the famine, they were even more rare.

**43:12** Joseph's brothers arrived home from Egypt only to find in their grain sacks the money they had used to pay for the grain (42:35). Some months later, when it was time to return to Egypt for more food, Jacob instructed them to take extra money so they could pay for the previous purchase as well as for additional grain. He was a man of integrity who paid for what he bought, whether he had to or not. We should follow his example and guard our integrity. A reputation for honesty is worth far more than the money we might gain by compromising it.



43:32  
Gen 46:34  
Exod 8:26  
43:33  
Gen 44:12

<sup>32</sup>And they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, which did eat with him, by themselves: because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians. <sup>33</sup>And they sat before him, the first-born according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one at another. <sup>34</sup>And he took *and sent* messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him.

44:1  
Gen 42:25; 43:16

**44** And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men's sacks *with food*, as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth. <sup>2</sup>And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn money. And he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken. <sup>3</sup>As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses. <sup>4</sup>And when they were gone out of the city, *and not yet* far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good? <sup>5</sup>Is not this *it* in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? ye have done evil in *so* doing.

44:4  
Prov 17:13

44:5  
Gen 30:27  
Deut 18:10-14

<sup>6</sup>And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these same words. <sup>7</sup>And they said unto him, Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing: <sup>8</sup>behold, the money, which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold? <sup>9</sup>With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen.

44:8  
Gen 43:21

44:9  
Gen 31:32

<sup>10</sup>And he said, Now also *let it be* according unto your words: he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless. <sup>11</sup>Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack. <sup>12</sup>And he searched, *and* began at the eldest, and left at the youngest: and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. <sup>13</sup>Then they rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city.

44:12  
Gen 44:2

44:13  
Gen 37:29, 34

<sup>14</sup>And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house; for he *was* yet there: and they fell before him on the ground. <sup>15</sup>And Joseph said unto them, What deed *is* this that ye have done? wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?

44:15  
Gen 44:5

44:16  
Gen 42:11; 43:18

<sup>16</sup>And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we *are* my lord's servants, both we, and *he* also with whom the cup is found.

44:18  
Gen 37:7-8;  
41:40-44

44:19  
Gen 42:11; 43:7

44:21  
Gen 42:11, 15

<sup>17</sup>And he said, God forbid that I should do so: *but* the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father.

<sup>18</sup>Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou *art* even as Pharaoh. <sup>19</sup>My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother? <sup>20</sup>And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him. <sup>21</sup>And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. <sup>22</sup>And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for *if* he should leave his father, *his father* would die. <sup>23</sup>And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more.

44:23  
Gen 43:3

43:34 *messes*: servings. 44:2 *corn*: grain. 44:5 *divineth*: practices foretelling the future. 44:9 *bondmen*: slaves. 44:12 *left*: ended. 44:13 *rent*: tore. *laded*: loaded. 44:15 *wot*: know. *divine*: foresee with supernatural powers.

**43:32** Why did Joseph eat by himself? He was following the laws of the Egyptians' caste system. Egyptians considered themselves highly intelligent and sophisticated. They looked upon shepherds and nomads as uncultured and even vulgar. As a Hebrew, Joseph could not eat with Egyptians even though he outranked them. As foreigners and shepherds, his brothers were lower in rank than any Egyptian citizens, so they had to eat separately, too.

**44:2** Joseph's silver cup was a symbol of his authority. It was thought to have supernatural powers, and to steal it would be a serious crime. Such goblets were used for predicting the future. A person poured water into the cup and interpreted the reflections, ripples, and bubbles. Joseph wouldn't have needed his cup, since God told him everything he needed to know about the future.

**44:13** Rending or ripping clothes was an expression of deep sorrow, a customary manner of showing grief. The brothers were terrified that Benjamin might be harmed.

**44:16-34** When Judah was younger, he had shown no regard for his brother Joseph or his father, Jacob. First he had convinced his brothers to sell Joseph as a slave (37:27); then he had joined his brothers in lying to his father about Joseph's fate (37:32). But what a change had taken place in Judah! The man who had sold one favored little brother into slavery now offered to become a slave himself to save another favored little brother. He was so concerned for his father and younger brother that he was willing to die for them. When you are ready to give up hope on yourself or someone else, remember that God can change even the most selfish personality.

<sup>24</sup>And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. <sup>25</sup>And our father said, Go again, *and* buy us a little food. <sup>26</sup>And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother *be* with us. <sup>27</sup>And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two *sons*: <sup>28</sup>and the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since: <sup>29</sup>and if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

44:24  
Gen 42:29-34  
44:25  
Gen 42:2  
44:26  
Gen 43:5  
44:27  
Gen 46:19  
44:28  
Gen 37:33  
44:29  
Gen 42:38  
44:30  
1 Sam 18:1  
44:32  
Gen 43:9

<sup>30</sup>Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad *be* not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life; <sup>31</sup>it shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not *with us*, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave. <sup>32</sup>For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever. <sup>33</sup>Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. <sup>34</sup>For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad *be* not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father.

*Joseph sends for Jacob*

**45** Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. <sup>2</sup>And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard.

45:1  
Gen 43:31

<sup>3</sup>And Joseph said unto his brethren, *I am* Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence. <sup>4</sup>And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, *I am* Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. <sup>5</sup>Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. <sup>6</sup>For these two years *hath* the famine *been* in the land: and yet *there are* five years, in the which *there shall* neither *be* earing nor harvest. <sup>7</sup>And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. <sup>8</sup>So now *it was* not you *that* sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

45:3  
Gen 43:7  
45:4  
Gen 37:28  
45:5  
Gen 50:20  
45:6  
Gen 41:30

<sup>9</sup>Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not: <sup>10</sup>and thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast: <sup>11</sup>and there will I nourish thee; for yet *there are* five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty.

45:8  
Gen 41:41  
Judg 17:10

<sup>12</sup>And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that *it is* my mouth that speaketh unto you. <sup>13</sup>And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither.

45:9  
Acts 7:14  
45:10  
Gen 46:28, 34  
45:11  
Gen 47:12

<sup>14</sup>And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. <sup>15</sup>Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.

45:13  
Acts 7:14

<sup>16</sup>And the fame thereof was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, Joseph's brethren are come: and it pleased Pharaoh well, and his servants. <sup>17</sup>And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren, This do ye; lade your beasts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan; <sup>18</sup>and

45:14  
Gen 45:2

45:16  
Acts 7:13  
45:17  
Gen 42:26  
45:18  
Gen 27:28

44:32 *surety*: the guarantee. 44:33 *bondman*: slave. 44:34 *peradventure*: perhaps. 45:6 *earing*: plowing. 45:9 *tarry*: stay. 45:16 *fame*: news. 45:17 *lade*: load.

**44:32, 33** Judah had promised Jacob that he would guarantee young Benjamin's safety (43:9). Now Judah had a chance to keep that promise. Becoming a slave was a terrible fate, but Judah was determined to keep his word to his father. He showed great courage in carrying out his promise. Accepting a responsibility means carrying it out with determination and courage, regardless of the personal sacrifice.

**44:33** Joseph wanted to see if his brothers' attitudes had changed for the better, so he tested the way they treated each other. Judah, the brother who had stepped forward with the plan to sell Joseph (37:27), now stepped forward to take Benjamin's punishment so that Benjamin could return to their father. This

courageous act convinced Joseph that his brothers had dramatically changed for the better.

**45:4-8** Although Joseph's brothers had wanted to get rid of him, God used even their evil actions to fulfill his ultimate plan. He sent Joseph ahead to preserve their lives, save Egypt, and prepare the way for the beginning of the nation of Israel. God is sovereign. His plans are not dictated by human actions. When others intend evil toward you, remember that they are only God's tools. As Joseph said to his brothers, "Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good" (50:20).

**45:17-20** Joseph had been rejected, kidnapped, enslaved, and imprisoned. Although his brothers had been unfaithful

45:19  
Gen 45:27; 46:5

45:20  
Gen 46:6

45:22  
Gen 24:53  
2 Kgs 5:5

45:23  
Gen 43:11

45:24  
Gen 42:21-22

45:26  
Gen 37:31-35

take your father and your households, and come unto me: and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land. <sup>19</sup>Now thou art commanded, this do ye; take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come. <sup>20</sup>Also regard not your stuff; for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours.

<sup>21</sup>And the children of Israel did so: and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way. <sup>22</sup>To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred *pieces* of silver, and five changes of raiment. <sup>23</sup>And to his father he sent after this *manner*; ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she asses laden with corn and bread and meat for his father by the way. <sup>24</sup>So he sent his brethren away, and they departed: and he said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way.

<sup>25</sup>And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father, <sup>26</sup>and told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt.

45:20 *stuff*: belongings. 45:22 *raiment*: clothing.



JUDAH

People who are leaders stand out. They don't necessarily look or act a certain way until the need for their action is apparent. Among their skills are outspokenness, decisiveness, action, and control. These skills can be used for great good or great evil. Jacob's fourth son, Judah, was a natural leader. The events of his life provided many opportunities to exercise those skills. Unfortunately, Judah's decisions were often shaped more by the pressures of the moment than by a conscious desire to cooperate with God's plan. But when he did recognize his mistakes, he was willing to admit them. His experience with Tamar and the final confrontation with Joseph are both examples of Judah's willingness to bear the blame when confronted. It was one of the qualities he passed on to his descendant David.

Whether or not we have Judah's natural leadership qualities, we share with him a tendency to be blind toward our own sin. Too often, however, we don't share his willingness to admit mistakes. From Judah we can learn that it is not wise to wait until our errors force us to admit to wrongdoing. It is far better to admit our mistakes openly, to shoulder the blame, and to seek forgiveness.

**Strengths and accomplishments:**

- Was a natural leader—outspoken and decisive
- Thought clearly and took action in high-pressure situations
- Was willing to stand by his word and put himself on the line when necessary
- Was the fourth son of 12, through whom God would eventually bring David and Jesus, the Messiah

**Weaknesses and mistakes:**

- Suggested to his brothers they sell Joseph into slavery
- Failed to keep his promise to his daughter-in-law, Tamar

**Lessons from his life:**

- God is in control, far beyond the immediate situation
- Procrastination often makes matters worse
- Judah's offer to substitute his life for Benjamin's is a picture of what his descendant Jesus would do for all people

**Vital statistics:**

- Where: Canaan and Egypt
- Occupation: Shepherd
- Relatives: Parents: Jacob and Leah. Wife: daughter of Shuah. Daughter-in-law: Tamar. Eleven brothers, at least one sister, and at least five sons.

**Key verses:**

"Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? 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" (Genesis 49:8-10).

Judah's story is told in Genesis 29:35—50:26. He is also mentioned in 1 Chronicles 2—4.

to him, he graciously forgave them and shared his prosperity. Joseph demonstrated how God forgives us and showers us with goodness even though we have sinned against him. The same forgiveness and blessings are ours if we ask for them.

45:24 "See that ye fall not out by the way" could be translated, "Don't quarrel along the way."

45:26, 27 Jacob needed some evidence before he could believe the incredible news that Joseph was alive. Similarly, Thomas refused to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead until he could see and touch him (John 20:25). It is hard to change what you believe without all the facts—or sometimes even with the facts. Good news can be difficult to believe. Don't ever give up hope that God has wonderful things in store for you.

And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not. <sup>27</sup>And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them: and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived: <sup>28</sup>and Israel said, *It is enough*; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.

**6. Jacob's family moves to Egypt**

**46** And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-sheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac. <sup>2</sup>And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob.

And he said, Here *am* I.

<sup>3</sup>And he said, I *am* God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation: <sup>4</sup>I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up *again*: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.

<sup>5</sup>And Jacob rose up from Beer-sheba: and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him.

<sup>6</sup>And they took their cattle, and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob, and all his seed with him: <sup>7</sup>his sons, and his sons' sons with him, his daughters, and his sons' daughters, and all his seed brought he with him into Egypt.

<sup>8</sup>And these *are* the names of the children of Israel, which came into Egypt, Jacob and his sons: Reuben, Jacob's firstborn. <sup>9</sup>And the sons of Reuben; Hanoch, and Phallu, and Hezron, and Carmi. <sup>10</sup>And the sons of Simeon; Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanitish woman. <sup>11</sup>And the sons of Levi; Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. <sup>12</sup>And the sons of Judah; Er, and Onan, and Shelah, and Pharez, and Zarah: but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. And the sons of Pharez were Hezron and Hamul. <sup>13</sup>And the sons of Issachar; Tola, and Phuvah, and Job, and Shimron. <sup>14</sup>And the sons of Zebulun; Sered, and Elon, and Jahleel. <sup>15</sup>These *be* the sons of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob in Padan-aram, with his daughter Dinah: all the souls of his sons and his daughters *were* thirty and three.

<sup>16</sup>And the sons of Gad; Ziphion, and Haggi, Shuni, and Ezbon, Eri, and Arodi, and Areli. <sup>17</sup>And the sons of Asher; Jimnah, and Ishuah, and Isui, and Beriah, and Serah their sister: and the sons of Beriah; Heber, and Malchiel. <sup>18</sup>These *are* the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter, and these she bare unto Jacob, *even* sixteen souls.

<sup>19</sup>The sons of Rachel Jacob's wife; Joseph, and Benjamin. <sup>20</sup>And unto Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, which Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On bare unto him. <sup>21</sup>And the sons of Benjamin *were* Belah, and Becher, and Ashbel, Gera, and Naaman, Ehi, and Rosh, Muppim, and Huppim, and Ard. <sup>22</sup>These *are* the sons of Rachel, which were born to Jacob: all the souls *were* fourteen.

**46:6** seed: descendants.

**45:27**  
Gen 45:19  
**45:28**  
Gen 44:28  
**46:1**  
Gen 21:14; 26:24; 28:13; 31:42  
**46:2**  
Gen 22:11; 31:11 Num 12:6  
**46:3**  
Gen 17:1; 26:2  
**46:4**  
Gen 28:13 Exod 3:8  
**46:5**  
Gen 45:19  
**46:6**  
Num 20:15 Deut 26:5 Acts 7:15  
**46:8**  
Gen 29:32; 35:26  
**46:9**  
1 Chr 5:3  
**46:10**  
1 Chr 4:24  
**46:11**  
1 Chr 6:16  
**46:12**  
1 Chr 2:3  
**46:13**  
1 Chr 7:1  
**46:14**  
Gen 30:20  
**46:15**  
Gen 30:21  
**46:16**  
Gen 30:11 Num 26:15  
**46:17**  
Gen 30:13  
**46:19**  
Gen 44:27  
**46:20**  
Gen 41:45, 50-52  
**46:21**  
Num 26:38-41 1 Chr 7:6-12  
**46:22**  
Gen 35:24

**46:3, 4** The Israelites did become a great nation, and Jacob's descendants eventually returned to Canaan. The book of Exodus recounts the story of Israel's slavery in Egypt for 400 years (fulfilling God's words to Abram in 15:13-16), and the book of Joshua gives an exciting account of the Israelites entering and conquering Canaan, the Promised Land.

**46:3, 4** God told Jacob to leave his home and travel to a strange and faraway land. But God reassured him by promising to go with him and take care of him. When new situations or surroundings frighten you, recognize that experiencing fear is normal. To be paralyzed by fear, however, is an indication that you question God's ability to take care of you.

**46:4** Jacob never returned to Canaan. This was a promise to his descendants that they would return. "Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes" refers to attending to him as he faced death. It was God's promise that he would never know the pain of being lonely again.



**JACOB MOVES TO EGYPT**

After hearing the joyful news that Joseph was alive, Jacob packed up and moved his family to Egypt. Stopping first in Beer-sheba, Jacob offered sacrifices and received assurance from God that Egypt was where he should go. Jacob and his family settled in the land of Goshen, in the northeastern part of Egypt.

**46:23**  
Gen 30:6  
Num 26:42

**46:24**  
Gen 30:8

**46:25**  
Gen 35:25

**46:27**  
Exod 1:5  
Deut 10:22  
Acts 7:14

**46:28**  
Gen 43:3; 45:10

**46:29**  
Gen 45:14-15

**46:30**  
Gen 44:28

**46:31**  
Gen 47:1

**46:32**  
Gen 37:2; 47:3

**46:33**  
Gen 47:3

**46:34**  
Gen 13:7; 26:20;  
37:2

**47:1**  
Gen 46:31

**47:2**  
Gen 43:15

**47:3**  
Gen 46:32-33

**47:4**  
Gen 46:34

**47:6**  
Gen 45:18  
Exod 18:21, 25

**47:7**  
Gen 47:10  
2 Sam 14:22  
1 Kgs 8:66

**47:10**  
Gen 14:19

**47:11**  
Exod 1:11; 12:37

**47:12**  
Gen 45:11; 47:24

**47:13**  
Gen 41:30  
Acts 7:11

**47:14**  
Gen 41:56

<sup>23</sup>And the sons of Dan; Hushim. <sup>24</sup>And the sons of Naphtali; Jahzeel, and Guni, and Jezer, and Shillem. <sup>25</sup>These *are* the sons of Bilhah, which Laban gave unto Rachel his daughter, and she bare these unto Jacob: all the souls *were* seven.

<sup>26</sup>All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls *were* threescore and six; <sup>27</sup>and the sons of Joseph, which were born him in Egypt, *were* two souls: all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, *were* threescore and ten.

<sup>28</sup>And he sent Judah before him unto Joseph, to direct his face unto Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen. <sup>29</sup>And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen, and presented himself unto him; and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. <sup>30</sup>And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou *art* yet alive.

<sup>31</sup>And Joseph said unto his brethren, and unto his father's house, I will go up, and shew Pharaoh, and say unto him, My brethren, and my father's house, which *were* in the land of Canaan, are come unto me; <sup>32</sup>and the men *are* shepherds, for their trade hath been to feed cattle; and they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have. <sup>33</sup>And it shall come to pass, when Pharaoh shall call you, and shall say, What is your occupation? <sup>34</sup>that ye shall say, Thy servants' trade hath been about cattle from our youth even until now, both we, *and* also our fathers: that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians.

**47** Then Joseph came and told Pharaoh, and said, My father and my brethren, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan; and, behold, they *are* in the land of Goshen. <sup>2</sup>And he took some of his brethren, *even* five men, and presented them unto Pharaoh. <sup>3</sup>And Pharaoh said unto his brethren, What is your occupation?

And they said unto Pharaoh, Thy servants *are* shepherds, both we, *and* also our fathers. <sup>4</sup>They said moreover unto Pharaoh, For to sojourn in the land are we come; for thy servants have no pasture for their flocks; for the famine is sore in the land of Canaan: now therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen.

<sup>5</sup>And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee: <sup>6</sup>the land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell: and if thou knowest *any* men of activity among them, then make them rulers over my cattle.

<sup>7</sup>And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh: and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. <sup>8</sup>And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old *art* thou?

<sup>9</sup>And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage *are* an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage. <sup>10</sup>And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh.

<sup>11</sup>And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded. <sup>12</sup>And Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household, with bread, according to *their* families.

<sup>13</sup>And *there was* no bread in all the land; for the famine *was* very sore, so that the land of Egypt and *all* the land of Canaan fainted by reason of the famine. <sup>14</sup>And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the corn which they bought: and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house.

**46:26** loins: body. **47:4** sore: severe. **47:6** activity: competence.

**46:31–34** Jacob moved his whole family to Egypt, but they wanted to live apart from the Egyptians. To ensure this, Joseph told them to let Pharaoh know they were shepherds. Although Pharaoh may have been sympathetic to shepherds (for he was probably descended from the nomadic Hyksos line), the Egyptian culture would not willingly accept shepherds in their midst. The strategy worked, and Jacob's family was able to benefit from Pharaoh's generosity as well as from the Egyptians' prejudice.

**47:1–6** Joseph's faithfulness affected his entire family. When he was in the pit and in prison, Joseph must have wondered about

his future. Instead of despairing, he faithfully obeyed God and did what was right. Here we see one of the exciting results. We may not always see the effects of our faith, but we can be sure that God will honor faithfulness.



<sup>15</sup>And when money failed in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came unto Joseph, and said, Give us bread: for why should we die in thy presence? for the money faileth. **47:15**  
Gen 47:18-19

<sup>16</sup>And Joseph said, Give your cattle; and I will give you for your cattle, if money fail. <sup>17</sup>And they brought their cattle unto Joseph: and Joseph gave them bread *in exchange* for horses, and for the flocks, and for the cattle of the herds, and for the asses: and he fed them with bread for all their cattle for that year. **47:17**  
Exod 14:9

<sup>18</sup>When that year was ended, they came unto him the second year, and said unto him, We will not hide *it* from my lord, how that our money is spent; my lord also hath our herds of cattle; there is not aught left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies, and our lands: <sup>19</sup>wherefore shall we die before thine eyes, both we and our land? buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh: and give *us* seed, that we may live, and not die, that the land be not desolate. **47:19**  
Neh 5:2  
Job 2:4  
Lam 1:11

<sup>20</sup>And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them: so the land became Pharaoh's. <sup>21</sup>And as for the people, he removed them to cities from *one* end of the borders of Egypt even to the *other* end thereof. <sup>22</sup>Only the land of the priests bought he not; for the priests had a portion *assigned them* of Pharaoh, and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them: wherefore they sold not their lands. **47:22**  
Deut 14:28-29

<sup>23</sup>Then Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh: lo, *here* is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land. <sup>24</sup>And it shall come to pass in the increase, that ye shall give the fifth *part* unto Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own, for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your households, and for food for your little ones. **47:24**  
Gen 41:34

<sup>25</sup>And they said, Thou hast saved our lives: let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants. <sup>26</sup>And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt unto this day, *that* Pharaoh should have the fifth *part*; except the land of the priests only, *which* became not Pharaoh's. **47:25**  
Gen 32:5  
**47:26**  
Gen 47:22

## 7. Jacob and Joseph die in Egypt

### *Jacob blesses Joseph*

<sup>27</sup>And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly. <sup>28</sup>And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seven-teen years: so the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years. <sup>29</sup>And the time drew nigh that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt: <sup>30</sup>but I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their buryingplace. **47:27**  
Exod 1:7  
**47:29**  
Gen 24:2; 50:24-25  
**47:30**  
Gen 23:17-20;  
25:9; 49:29  
Acts 7:15-16

And he said, I will do as thou hast said.

<sup>31</sup>And he said, Swear unto me. And he sware unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head. **47:31**  
Heb 11:21

**48** And it came to pass after these things, that *one* told Joseph, Behold, thy father *is* sick: and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. <sup>2</sup>And *one* told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed. <sup>3</sup>And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me, <sup>4</sup>and said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee *for* an everlasting possession. <sup>5</sup>And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, *are* mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. <sup>6</sup>And thy issue, which thou begettest after them, shall be thine, *and* shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance. <sup>7</sup>And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet *there was* but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same *is* Bethlehem. **48:1**  
Gen 41:51-52  
Heb 11:21  
**48:3**  
Gen 28:13-19;  
35:9-12  
**48:5**  
Gen 29:32-33  
**48:7**  
Gen 35:19

**48:6** *issue: offspring.*

**47:29-31** Jacob had Joseph promise to bury him in his homeland. Few things were written in this culture, so a person's word carried as much force as a written contract does today. People

today seem to find it easy to say, "I didn't mean that." God's people, however, are to speak the truth and live the truth. Let your words be as binding as a written contract.



48:9  
Gen 33:5

<sup>8</sup>And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, Who *are* these?

<sup>9</sup>And Joseph said unto his father, They *are* my sons, whom God hath given me in this *place*.

48:10  
Gen 27:1

And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them. <sup>10</sup>Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, *so that* he could not see. And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them, and embraced them. <sup>11</sup>And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed.

48:11  
Gen 44:28

48:12  
Gen 33:3; 42:6

<sup>12</sup>And Joseph brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth. <sup>13</sup>And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought *them* near unto him. <sup>14</sup>And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid *it* upon Ephraim's head, who *was* the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh *was* the firstborn. <sup>15</sup>And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, <sup>16</sup>the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.

48:14  
Gen 41:51-52

48:15  
Gen 17:1; 49:24

48:16  
Gen 22:11; 28:13-15; 31:11  
<sup>1</sup>Heb 11:21

<sup>17</sup>And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head. <sup>18</sup>And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this *is* the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head.

48:14 *wittingly*: knowingly.

**PARALLELS  
BETWEEN  
JOSEPH  
AND JESUS**

Genesis  
37—50

<i>Joseph</i>	<i>Parallels</i>	<i>Jesus</i>
37:3 . . . . .	His father loved him dearly . . . . .	Matthew 3:17
37:2 . . . . .	A shepherd of his father's sheep . . . . .	John 10:11, 27
37:13, 14 . . . . .	Sent by father to brothers . . . . .	Hebrews 2:11
37:4 . . . . .	Hated by brothers . . . . .	John 7:5
37:20 . . . . .	Others plotted to harm them . . . . .	John 11:53
39:7 . . . . .	Tempted . . . . .	Matthew 4:1
37:25 . . . . .	Taken to Egypt . . . . .	Matthew 2:14, 15
37:23 . . . . .	Robes taken from them . . . . .	John 19:23
37:28 . . . . .	Sold for the price of a slave . . . . .	Matthew 26:15
39:20 . . . . .	Bound in chains . . . . .	Matthew 27:2
39:16—18 . . . . .	Falsely accused . . . . .	Matthew 26:59, 60
40:2, 3 . . . . .	Placed with two other prisoners, one who was saved and the other lost . . . . .	Luke 23:32
41:46 . . . . .	Both 30 years old at the beginning of public recognition . . . . .	Luke 3:23
41:41 . . . . .	Exalted after suffering . . . . .	Philippians 2:9—11
45:1—15 . . . . .	Forgave those who wronged them . . . . .	Luke 23:34
45:7 . . . . .	Saved their nation . . . . .	Matthew 1:21
50:20 . . . . .	What men did to hurt them God turned to good . . . . .	1 Corinthians 2:7, 8

**48:8–20** Jacob gave Ephraim, instead of his older brother Manasseh, the greater blessing. When Joseph objected, Jacob refused to listen, for God had told him that Ephraim would become greater. God often works in unexpected ways. When he chooses people to fulfill his plans, he always goes deeper than appearance, tradition, or position. He sometimes surprises us by choosing the less obvious person. God can use you to carry out his plans, even if you don't think you have all the qualifications.

**48:11** When Joseph became a slave, Jacob thought he was dead and wept in despair (37:34). But eventually God's plan allowed Jacob to regain not only his son, but his grandchildren as well. Circumstances are never so bad that they are beyond God's help. Jacob regained his son. Job got a new family (Job 42:10–17). Mary regained her brother Lazarus (John 11:1–44).

We need never despair, because we belong to a loving God. We don't yet know what good he may bring out of a seemingly hopeless situation.

**48:15** Jacob spoke of God as one who fed him throughout his life. In his old age, he could clearly see his dependence upon God. This marks a total attitude change from that of his scheming and dishonest youth. To develop an attitude like Jacob's, be willing to be fed. When people chase after what they want with no thought of God, they are willing to do anything, even what is wrong, in order to get it. It is far better to trust God and realize that all good things come from his hand.

<sup>19</sup>And his father refused, and said, I know *it*, my son, I know *it*: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations.

**48:19**  
Gen 28:14; 46:3

<sup>20</sup>And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh.

**48:20**  
Ruth 4:11

<sup>21</sup>And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers. <sup>22</sup>Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.

**48:21**  
Gen 28:15; 46:4; 50:24  
**48:22**  
Josh 24:32  
John 4:5

*Jacob's prophecies*

**49** And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you *that* which shall befall you in the last days.

**49:1**  
Num 24:14

<sup>2</sup>Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father.

<sup>3</sup>Reuben, thou *art* my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power:

**49:3**  
Num 26:5  
Deut 21:17  
Pss 78:51; 105:36

<sup>4</sup>Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou *it*: he went up to my couch.

**49:4**  
Gen 35:22  
Deut 27:20

<sup>5</sup>Simeon and Levi *are* brethren; instruments of cruelty *are* in their habitations.

**49:5**  
Gen 29:33-34; 34:25-30

<sup>6</sup>O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall.

**49:6**  
Gen 34:26

<sup>7</sup>Cursed *be* their anger, for *it was* fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.

**49:7**  
Josh 19:1, 9; 21:1-42

<sup>8</sup>Judah, thou *art he* whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand *shall be* in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee.

**49:8**  
1 Chr 5:2  
Heb 7:14

<sup>9</sup>Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?

<sup>10</sup>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*.

**49:9**  
Num 24:9  
Mic 5:8

<sup>11</sup>Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes:

**49:10**  
Num 24:17  
Pss 2:6-9; 60:7

<sup>12</sup>His eyes *shall be* red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.

**49:11**  
Deut 8:7-8  
2 Kgs 18:32

<sup>13</sup>Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he *shall be* for an haven of ships; and his border *shall be* unto Zidon.

**49:13**  
Deut 33:18-19

<sup>14</sup>Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens:

<sup>15</sup>And he saw that rest *was* good, and the land that *it was* pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute.

**49:14**  
Jugd 5:16  
Ps 68:13

<sup>16</sup>Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel.

<sup>17</sup>Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.

**49:15**  
Josh 19:17-23

<sup>18</sup>I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD.

**49:16**  
Deut 33:22  
Jugd 18:26-27

<sup>19</sup>Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last.

**49:19**  
Deut 33:20

**49:9** *whelp*: cub. *couched*: lies down. **49:15** *tribute*: forced labor. **49:17** *adder*: snake.

**48:20-22** Jacob was giving these young boys land occupied by the Philistines and Canaanites. His gift became reality when the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh occupied the east and west sides of the Jordan River (Joshua 16).

**49:3-28** Jacob blessed each of his sons, and then made a predication about each son's future. The way the men had lived played an important part in Jacob's blessing and prophecy. Our past also affects our present and future. By sunrise tomorrow, our actions of today will have become part of the past. Yet they will already have begun to shape the future. What actions can you choose or avoid that will positively shape your future?

**49:4** The oldest son was supposed to receive a double inheritance, but Reuben lost his special honor. Unruly and untrustworthy, especially in his younger days, he had gone so far as to sleep with one of his father's concubines. Jacob could not give the birthright blessing to such a dishonorable son.

**49:8-12** Judah had sold Joseph into slavery and tried to defraud his daughter-in-law. So why did Jacob grant him this blessing? God had chosen Judah to be the ancestor of Israel's line of kings (that is the meaning of "the sceptre shall not depart from Judah"). This may have been due to Judah's dramatic change of character (44:33, 34). Judah's line would produce the promised Messiah, Jesus.

**49:10** What is *Shiloh*? The meaning of this difficult passage is disputed. *Shiloh* may be another name for the Messiah for its literal meaning is "sent." *Shiloh* might also refer to the Tabernacle set up at the city of Shiloh (Joshua 18:1).

**49:18** In the middle of his prophecy to Dan, Jacob exclaimed, "I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD." He was emphasizing to Dan that he would be a strong leader only if he trusted in God, not in his natural strength or ability. Those who are strong, attractive, or talented often find it easier to trust in themselves than in God, who gave them their gifts. Remember to thank God for what you are and have, so your trust does not become misplaced.

**49:20**  
Deut 33:24-25  
**49:21**  
Deut 33:23  
**49:22**  
Deut 33:13-17  
**49:23**  
Gen 37:24  
**49:24**  
Ps 132:2, 5  
Isa 41:10; 49:26  
**49:25**  
Gen 28:13  
  
**49:26**  
Deut 33:15-16  
  
**49:27**  
Deut 33:12  
  
**49:29**  
Gen 23:16-20;  
25:8-9  
  
**49:31**  
Gen 23:19; 25:9;  
35:29  
**49:33**  
Gen 25:8  
Acts 7:15  
  
**50:1**  
Gen 46:4  
**50:2**  
Gen 50:26  
**50:3**  
Num 20:29  
Deut 34:8

<sup>20</sup>Out of Asher his bread *shall be* fat, and he shall yield royal dainties.  
<sup>21</sup>Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words.  
<sup>22</sup>Joseph is a fruitful bough, *even* a fruitful bough by a well; *whose* branches run over the wall:  
<sup>23</sup>The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot *at him*, and hated him:  
<sup>24</sup>But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty *God* of Jacob; (from thence *is* the shepherd, the stone of Israel.)  
<sup>25</sup>*Even* by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb:  
<sup>26</sup>The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.  
<sup>27</sup>Benjamin shall ravin *as* a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.  
<sup>28</sup>All these *are* the twelve tribes of Israel: and this *is it* that their father spake unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them.  
<sup>29</sup>And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that *is* in the field of Ephron the Hittite, <sup>30</sup>in the cave that *is* in the field of Machpelah, which *is* before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a buryingplace. <sup>31</sup>There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah. <sup>32</sup>The purchase of the field and of the cave that *is* therein *was* from the children of Heth. <sup>33</sup>And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.

*Jacob is buried in Canaan*

**50** And Joseph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him. <sup>2</sup>And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father: and the physicians embalmed Israel. <sup>3</sup>And forty days were fulfilled for him; for so are fulfilled the

**49:20** *dainties*: delicacies. **49:21** *goodly*: beautiful. **49:23** *sorely*: bitterly. **49:26** *progenitors*: ancestors. **49:27** *ravin*: be vicious.

**JACOB'S SONS AND THEIR NOTABLE DESCENDANTS**

Jacob's 12 sons were the ancestors of the 12 tribes of Israel. The entire nation of Israel came from these men.

Reuben . . . . .	none
Simeon . . . . .	none
Levi . . . . .	Aaron, Moses, Eli, John the Baptist
Judah . . . . .	David, Jesus
Dan . . . . .	Samson
Naphtali . . . . .	Barak, Elijah (?)
Gad . . . . .	Jephthah (?)
Asher . . . . .	none
Issachar . . . . .	none
Zebulun . . . . .	none
Joseph . . . . .	Joshua, Deborah, Gideon, Samuel
Benjamin . . . . .	Saul, Esther, Paul

**49:22** Joseph would have some heroic descendants. Among them were Joshua, who would lead the Israelites into the Promised Land (Joshua 1:10, 11); Deborah and Gideon, judges of Israel (Judges 4:4; 6:11, 12); and Samuel, a great prophet (1 Samuel 3:19).  
**49:23, 24** These verses express God's repeated rescues of Joseph when his enemies attacked him. So often we struggle without thinking that God is able to help us fight our battles, whether they are against people with weapons or against spiritual forces. Joseph was able to draw closer to God as adversity mounted. To trust God to rescue you shows great faith. Can you trust him when injury or persecution is directed at you? Such spiritual battles require teamwork between courageous, faithful people and a mighty God.

**50:1-11** When Jacob died at the age of 147, Joseph wept and mourned for months. When someone close to us dies, we need a long period of time to work through our grief. Crying and sharing our feelings with others helps us recover and go on with life. Allow yourself and others the freedom to grieve over the loss of a loved one, and give yourself time enough to bring grieving to completion.  
**50:2, 3** Embalming was typical for Egyptians but unusual for nomadic shepherds. Believing that the dead went to the next world in their physical bodies, the Egyptians embalmed bodies to preserve them so they could function in the world to come. Jacob's family allowed him to be embalmed as a sign of courtesy and respect to the Egyptians.

days of those which are embalmed: and the Egyptians mourned for him threescore and ten days.

<sup>4</sup>And when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spake unto the house of Pharaoh, saying, If now I have found grace in your eyes, speak, I pray you, in the ears of Pharaoh, saying, <sup>5</sup>My father made me swear, saying, Lo, I die: in my grave which I have digged for me in the land of Canaan, there shalt thou bury me. Now therefore let me go up, I pray thee, and bury my father, and I will come again.

**50:5**  
Gen 47:29-31

<sup>6</sup>And Pharaoh said, Go up, and bury thy father, according as he made thee swear.

<sup>7</sup>And Joseph went up to bury his father: and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, <sup>8</sup>and all the house of Joseph, and his brethren, and his father's house: only their little ones, and their flocks, and their herds, they left in the land of Goshen. <sup>9</sup>And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen: and it was a very great company.

**50:8**  
Gen 45:10  
**50:9**  
Gen 41:43

<sup>10</sup>And they came to the threshingfloor of Atad, which is beyond Jordan, and there they mourned with a great and very sore lamentation: and he made a mourning for his father seven days. <sup>11</sup>And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning in the floor of Atad, they said, This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians: wherefore the name of it was called Abel-mizraim, which is beyond Jordan.

<sup>12</sup>And his sons did unto him according as he commanded them: <sup>13</sup>for his sons carried him into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which Abraham bought with the field for a possession of a buryingplace of Ephron the Hittite, before Mamre. <sup>14</sup>And Joseph returned into Egypt, he, and his brethren, and all that went up with him to bury his father, after he had buried his father.

**50:12**  
Gen 49:29  
**50:13**  
Gen 23:16-18

*Joseph treats his brothers kindly*

<sup>15</sup>And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him. <sup>16</sup>And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, <sup>17</sup>So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him.

**50:15**  
Gen 42:21-22  
**50:16**  
Gen 49:29  
**50:17**  
Gen 45:5, 7  
Matt 6:14  
Luke 6:27  
Rom 12:19

<sup>18</sup>And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants.

**50:18**  
Gen 37:7-10

<sup>19</sup>And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? <sup>20</sup>But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. <sup>21</sup>Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.

**50:19**  
Gen 30:2  
**50:20**  
Gen 37:26-27

*Joseph dies*

<sup>22</sup>And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he, and his father's house: and Joseph lived an hundred and ten years. <sup>23</sup>And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation: the children also of Machir the son of Manasseh were brought up upon Joseph's knees.

**50:21**  
Gen 45:11

**50:10** *sore*: solemn. **50:15** *peradventure*: perhaps. *reqnite*: repay.

**50:5** Joseph had proven himself trustworthy as Pharaoh's adviser. Because of his good record, Pharaoh was sure that he would return to Egypt as promised after burying his father in Canaan. Privileges and freedom often result when we have demonstrated our trustworthiness. Since trust must be built gradually over time, take every opportunity to prove your reliability even in minor matters.

**50:12, 13** Abraham had purchased the Cave of Machpelah as a burial place for his wife, Sarah (23:1-9). It was to be a burial place for his entire family. Jacob was Abraham's grandson, and Jacob's sons returned to Canaan to bury him in this cave along

with Abraham and Isaac. Their desire to be buried in this cave expressed their faith in God's promise to give their descendants the land of Canaan.

**50:15-21** Now that Jacob (or Israel) was dead, the brothers feared revenge from Joseph. Could he really have forgiven them for selling him into slavery? But to their surprise, Joseph not only forgave them but offered to care for them and their families. Joseph's forgiveness was complete. He demonstrated how God graciously accepts us even though we don't deserve it. Realizing that God forgives us even when we have ignored or rejected him should motivate us to forgive others.

**50:20** God brought good from the brothers' evil deed, Potiphar's wife's false accusation, the butler's neglect, and seven years of famine. The experiences in Joseph's life taught him that God brings good from evil for those who trust him. Do you trust God enough to wait patiently for him to bring good from the bad that happens to you? You can trust him because, as Joseph learned, God can transform evil into good.

**50:25**  
 Exod 13:19  
 Josh 24:32  
 Heb 11:22  
**50:26**  
 Exod 1:6

<sup>24</sup>And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. <sup>25</sup>And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. <sup>26</sup>So Joseph died, *being* an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

**50:24** Joseph was ready to die. He had no doubts that God would keep his promise and one day bring the Israelites back to their homeland. What a tremendous example! The secret of that kind of faith is a lifetime of trusting God. Our faith is like a muscle—it grows with exercise, gaining strength over time. After a lifetime of exercising trust, our faith can be as strong as Joseph's. Then at our death, we can be confident that God will fulfill all his promises to us and to those who come after.

**50:24** This verse sets the stage for what would begin to happen in Exodus and come to completion in Joshua. God was going to make Jacob's family into a great nation, lead them out of Egypt, and bring them into the land he had promised them. The nation

would rely heavily on this promise, and Joseph emphasized his belief that God would do what he had promised.

**50:26** The book of Genesis gives us rich descriptions of the lives of many great men and women who walked with God. They sometimes succeeded and often failed. Yet we learn much by reading the biographies of these people. Where did they get their inspiration? They got it by realizing God was with them despite their inadequacies. Knowing this should inspire us to maintain our walk with God and try to realize the potential he has given us.

# PSALMS

## VITAL STATISTICS

### PURPOSE:

To provide poetry for the expression of praise, worship, and confession to God

### AUTHORS:

David wrote 73 psalms; Asaph wrote 12; the sons of Korah wrote 9; Solomon wrote 2; Heman (with the sons of Korah), Ethan, and Moses each wrote one; and 51 psalms are anonymous. The New Testament ascribes two of the anonymous psalms (Psalms 2 and 95) to David (see Acts 4:25; Hebrews 4:7).

### ORIGINAL AUDIENCE:

The people of Israel

### DATE WRITTEN:

Between the time of Moses (approximately 1440 B.C.) and the Babylonian captivity (586 B.C.)

### SETTING:

For the most part, the psalms were not intended to be narrations of historical events. However, they often parallel events in history, such as David's flight from Saul and his sin with Bath-sheba.

### KEY VERSE:

"Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD" (150:6).

### KEY PERSON:

David

### KEY PLACE:

God's holy Temple



"Hi, how are you?" "Fine." Not exactly an "in-depth" discussion, this brief interchange is normal as friends and acquaintances pass and briefly touch each other with a cliché or two. Actually, clichés are a way of life, saturating sentences and permeating paragraphs. But if this is the essence of our communication, our relationships will stall on a superficial plateau. Facts and opinions also fill our verbiage. These words go deeper, but the true

person still lies hidden beneath them. In reality, only when honest feelings and emotions are shared can real people be known, loved, and helped.

Often, patterns of superficial communication spill over into our talks with God. We easily slide through well-worn lines recited for decades, or we quickly toss a cliché or two at God and call it prayer. Certainly God hears and understands these feeble attempts, but by limiting the depth of our communication, we become shallow in our relationship with him. But God knows us, and he wants to have genuine communication with us.

At the center of the Bible is the book of Psalms. This great collection of songs and prayers expresses the heart and soul of humanity. In them we find the whole range of human experiences expressed. This book holds no clichés. Instead, David and the other writers honestly poured out their true feelings, reflecting a dynamic, powerful, and life-changing friendship with God. The psalmists confess their sins, express their doubts and fears, ask God for help in times of trouble, and praise and worship him.

As you read the book of Psalms, you will hear believers crying out to God from the depths of despair, and you will hear them singing to him in the heights of celebration. But whether the psalm writers are despairing or rejoicing, you will always hear them sharing honest feelings with their God. Because of the honesty expressed by these writers, men and women throughout history have come, again and again, to the book of Psalms for comfort during times of struggle and distress. And through the psalms, they have risen from the depths of despair to new heights of joy and praise as they also discovered the power of God's everlasting love and forgiveness. Let the honesty of the psalms guide you into a deep and genuine relationship with God.

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## THE BLUEPRINT

### A. THE FIRST BOOK OF PSALMS (1:1—41:13)

While the psalms are not organized by topic, it is helpful to compare the dominant themes in each section of the Psalms to the five books of Moses. This first collection of psalms, mainly written by David, is similar to the book of Genesis. Just as Genesis tells how mankind was created, fell into sin, and was then promised redemption, many of these psalms discuss humans as blessed, fallen, and redeemed by God.

### B. THE SECOND BOOK OF PSALMS (42:1—72:20)

This collection of psalms, mainly written by David and the sons of Korah, is similar to the book of Exodus. Just as Exodus describes the nation of Israel, many of these psalms describe the nation as ruined and then recovered. As God rescued the nation of Israel, he also rescues us. We do not have to work out solutions first, but we can go to God with our problems and ask him to help.

### C. THE THIRD BOOK OF PSALMS (73:1—89:52)

This collection of psalms, mainly written by Asaph or Asaph's descendants, is similar to the book of Leviticus. Just as Leviticus discusses the Tabernacle and God's holiness, many of these psalms discuss the Temple and God's enthronement. Because God is almighty, we can turn to him for deliverance. These psalms praise God because he is holy, and his perfect holiness deserves our worship and reverence.



D. THE FOURTH BOOK OF PSALMS (90:1—106:48)

This collection of psalms, mainly written by unknown authors, is similar to the book of Numbers. Just as Numbers discusses the relationship of the nation of Israel to surrounding nations, these psalms often mention the relationship of God's overruling Kingdom to the other nations. Because we are citizens of the Kingdom of God, we can keep the events and troubles of earth in their proper perspective.

E. THE FIFTH BOOK OF PSALMS (107:1—150:6)

This collection of psalms, mainly written by David, is similar to the book of Deuteronomy. Just as Deuteronomy was concerned with God and his Word, these psalms are anthems of praise and thanksgiving for God and his Word. Most of the psalms were originally set to music and used in worship. We can use these psalms today as they were used in the past, as a hymnbook of praise and worship. This is a book that ought to make our hearts sing.

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## MEGATHEMES

THEME	EXPLANATION	IMPORTANCE
<i>Praise</i>	Psalms are songs of praise to God as our Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer. Praise is recognizing, appreciating, and expressing God's greatness.	Focusing our thoughts on God moves us to praise him. The more we know him, the more we can appreciate what he has done for us.
<i>God's Power</i>	God is all-powerful, and he always acts at the right time. He is sovereign over every situation. God's power is shown by the ways he reveals himself in creation, history, and his Word.	When we feel powerless, God can help us. His strength can overcome the despair of any pain or trial. We can always pray that he will deliver, protect, and sustain us.
<i>Forgiveness</i>	Many psalms are intense prayers asking God for forgiveness. God forgives us when we confess our sin and turn from it.	Because God forgives us, we can pray to him honestly and directly. When we receive his forgiveness, we move from alienation to intimacy, from guilt to love.
<i>Thankfulness</i>	We are grateful to God for his personal concern, help, and mercy. Not only does he protect, guide, and forgive us, but his creation provides everything we need.	When we realize how we benefit from knowing God, we can fully express our thanks to him. By thanking him often, we develop spontaneity in our prayer life.
<i>Trust</i>	God is faithful and just. When we put our trust in him, he quiets our hearts. Because he has been faithful throughout history, we can trust him in times of trouble.	People can be unfair and friends may desert us. But we can trust God. Knowing God intimately drives away doubt, fear, and loneliness.

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## A. THE FIRST BOOK OF PSALMS (1:1—41:13)

In this book, the psalm writers praise God for his justice, express confidence in God's compassion, recount the depravity of man, plead for vindication, ask God to deliver them from their enemies, speak of the blessedness of the forgiven sinner, and portray God as a shepherd. We should worship God with the same sense of adoration found in these psalms.

**Theme:** Life's two roads. The life of the faithful person is contrasted with the life of the faithless person.

**Author:** Anonymous

**1** <sup>1</sup> Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

1:1  
Pss 17:4; 26:5  
Prov 4:14  
Jer 15:17

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**1:1** The writer began this psalm by extolling the joys of being a godly person—one who obeys God and refuses to listen to those who discredit or ridicule him. Our friends and associates can have a profound influence on us, often in very subtle ways. If we insist on friendships with those who scoff at what God considers important, we sin by becoming indifferent to God's will. This attitude is the same as scoffing. Do your friends build up your faith, or do they tear it down? The influence of true friends should draw you closer to God, not hinder your relationship with him.

**1:1ff** God doesn't judge people on the basis of race, sex, or

national origin. He judges them on the basis of their faith in him and their response to his revealed will. Those who diligently try to obey God's will are blessed. They are like healthy, fruit-bearing trees with strong roots (Jeremiah 17:5–8), and God promises to watch over them. God's wisdom guides their lives. In contrast, those who don't obey God have meaningless lives that blow away like dust.

Only two paths of life lie before us—God's way of obedience or the way of rebellion and destruction. Be sure to choose God's path because the path you choose determines how you will spend eternity.

<sup>2</sup>But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

<sup>3</sup>And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

<sup>4</sup>The ungodly *are* not so: but *are* like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

<sup>5</sup>Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

<sup>6</sup>For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

**Theme:** God's ultimate rule. A psalm written to celebrate the coronation of an Israelite king, but also written for the coronation of Christ, the eternal King.

**Author:** David (see Acts 4:25, 26)

**2** <sup>1</sup>Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?

<sup>2</sup>The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, *saying*,

<sup>3</sup>Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

<sup>4</sup>He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision.

<sup>5</sup>Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.

<sup>6</sup>Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

<sup>7</sup>I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou *art* my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

<sup>8</sup>Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen *for* thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth *for* thy possession.

<sup>9</sup>Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

<sup>10</sup>Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

**2:1** *heathen:* nations. *imagine:* plot. **2:3** *bands asunder:* chains apart. **2:4** *have:* hold. **2:5** *vex:* terrify. *sore displeasure:* fierce fury.

**1:2**  
Pss 25:5; 63:5-6;  
119:13-16

**1:3**  
Gen 39:3  
Jer 17:7-8  
Ezek 47:12

**1:4**  
Job 21:18  
Isa 17:13

**1:6**  
Neh 1:7  
John 10:14  
2 Tim 2:19

**2:2**  
Ps 74:18, 23  
Jer 5:5  
John 1:41

**2:4**  
Pss 37:12-13; 59:8

**2:6**  
Pss 3:4; 45:6;  
48:1-2

**2:7**  
<sup>1</sup>Acts 13:32-33  
<sup>1</sup>Heb 1:5-6; 5:5

**2:8**  
Pss 21:1-2; 22:27

**2:9**  
Rev 2:26-27; 12:5;  
19:15

**2:10**  
Prov 8:14-15

**1:2** You can learn how to follow God by meditating on his Word. Meditating means spending time reading and thinking about what you have read. It means asking yourself how you should change so you're living as God wants. Knowing and meditating on God's Word are the first steps toward applying it to your everyday life. If you want to follow God more closely, you must know what he says.

**1:2** This "law of the LORD" includes all of Scripture: the five books of Moses, the prophets, and the other writings. The more we know of the whole scope of God's Word, the more resources we will have for our daily decisions.

**1:2, 3** These two verses hold simple wisdom: The more we delight in God's presence, the more fruitful we are. On the other hand, the more we allow the dark influences of those who ridicule God to overshadow us, the more we separate ourselves from our source of nourishment. We must have contact with unbelievers if we are to witness to them, but we must not be influenced to join in or imitate their behavior. If you want despair, spend time with scoffing sinners; but if you want joy, make friends with those who love God and his Word.

**1:3** The phrase "whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" does not mean immunity from failure or difficulties. Nor does it guarantee health, wealth, and happiness. What Scripture means by prosperity is this: When we apply God's wisdom to our lives, the fruit we bear will be good and will receive God's approval. As a tree soaks up water and bears luscious fruit, we also are to soak up God's Word, producing actions and attitudes that honor God. To achieve anything worthwhile, we must have God's Word in our hearts.

**1:4** Chaff is the outer shell (or husk) that must be removed to get at the valuable kernels of grain inside. Chaff was removed by a process called threshing and winnowing. After the plants were cut, they were crushed, and then the pieces were thrown into the air. Chaff is very light and is carried away by even the slightest wind, while the good grain falls back to the earth. Chaff is a symbol of a faithless life that drifts along without direction. Good grain is a symbol of a faithful life that can be used by God. Unlike grain, we can choose the direction we will take.

**2:1ff** Several psalms are called *messianic* because of their

prophetic descriptions of Jesus the Messiah (Christ)—his life, death, resurrection, and future reign. David, who may have written this psalm, was a shepherd, soldier, and king. Clearly he was also a prophet (Acts 2:29, 30), because this psalm describes the rebellion of the nations and the coming of Christ to establish his eternal reign. This psalm is often referred to in the New Testament (see Acts 4:25, 26; 13:33; Hebrews 1:5, 6; 5:5; Revelation 2:26, 27; 12:5; 19:15).

**2:1ff** David may have written these words during a rebellion by some of the surrounding heathen nations. Chosen and anointed by God, David knew that God would fulfill his promise to bring the Messiah into the world through his bloodline (2 Samuel 7:16; 1 Chronicles 17:11, 12).

**2:3** People often think they will be free if they can get away from God. Yet, inevitably, everyone serves somebody or something, whether a human king, an organization, or even one's own selfish desires. Just as a fish is not free when it leaves the water and a tree is not free when it leaves the soil, we are not free when we leave the Lord. We can find the one sure route to freedom by wholeheartedly serving God the Creator. He can set you free to be the one who he created you to be.

**2:4** God laughs, not at the nations, but at their confused thoughts about power. It is the laughter of a father when his three-year-old boasts that he or she can outrun him or beat him in a wrestling match. The father knows the limited strength of his little child, and God knows the boundaries of power of the nations. Every nation is limited, but God is omnipotent. If you have to choose between confidence in God or any nation, choose God!

**2:4** God is all-powerful. He created the world and knew about the empires of the earth long before they came into being (Daniel 2:26–45). But pride and power cause nations and leaders to rebel against God and try to break free of him. Many world leaders boast of their power, rant and rave against God and his people, and promise to take over and form their own empires. But God laughs, because any power they have comes from him, and he can also take it from them. We need not fear the boasts of tyrants, because they are in God's hands and will be judged by him.

2:11  
Pss 5:7;  
119:119-120  
Heb 12:28

2:12  
John 5:23  
Rom 9:33  
Rev 6:16

3:1  
2 Sam 15:12  
Ps 69:4

3:4  
Pss 4:3; 34:4; 99:9

3:5  
Lev 26:6  
Pss 4:8; 139:17-18  
Prov 3:24-26

3:6  
Pss 23:4; 27:3;  
118:10-13

11 Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.  
12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish *from* the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed *are* all they that put their trust in him.

**Theme:** Confidently trusting God for protection and peace  
**Author:** David

**3** *A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son*

- 1 LORD, how are they increased that trouble me! many *are* they that rise up against me.
- 2 Many *there be* which say of my soul, *There is* no help for him in God. Selah.
- 3 But thou, O LORD, *art* a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.
- 4 I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah.
- 5 I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me.
- 6 I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set *themselves* against me round about.

**REASONS TO READ PSALMS**



<i>When you want . . .</i>	<i>Read . . .</i>
to find comfort . . . . .	Psalm 23
to meet God intimately . . . . .	Psalm 103
to learn a new prayer . . . . .	Psalm 136
to learn a new song . . . . .	Psalm 92
to learn more about God . . . . .	Psalm 24
to understand yourself more clearly . . . . .	Psalm 8
to know how to come to God each day . . . . .	Psalm 5
to be forgiven for your sins . . . . .	Psalm 51
to feel worthwhile . . . . .	Psalm 139
to understand why you should read the Bible . . . . .	Psalm 119
to give praise to God . . . . .	Psalm 145
to know that God is in control . . . . .	Psalm 146
to give thanks to God . . . . .	Psalm 136
to please God. . . . .	Psalm 15
to know why you should worship God. . . . .	Psalm 104

God's Word was written to be studied and applied, and the book of Psalms lends itself most directly to application. We understand the psalms best when we "stand under" them and allow them to flow over us like a rain shower. We may turn to Psalms looking for something, but sooner or later we will meet Someone. As we read and memorize the psalms, we will gradually discover how much they are already part of us. They put into words our deepest hurts, longings, thoughts, and prayers. They gently push us toward being what God designed us to be—people loving and living for him.

**2:11, 12** To kiss the Son means to surrender fully and submit to the King. Christ is not only God's chosen King, he is also the rightful king of our hearts and lives. To be ready for Christ's return, we must submit to his leadership each day.

**3:1, 2** David felt like he was in the minority. As many as 10,000 soldiers may have been surrounding him at this time (3:6). Not only did David's enemies view life differently, they actively sought to harm him. As king, David could have trusted his army to defeat Absalom, but he depended upon God's mercy instead (3:4). Therefore, he was at peace with whatever outcome occurred, knowing that God's great purposes would prevail. We can overcome fear when we cry out to God for his protection in our darkest hour.

**3:1-3** David was not sitting on his throne in a place of power; he was running for his life from his rebellious son Absalom and a host of traitors. When circumstances go against us, we may be tempted to think that God also is against us. But David reminds us that the opposite is true. When everything seems to go wrong, God is still for us. If a circumstance has turned against you, don't blame God—seek him!

**3:2** The word "Selah" occurs 71 times in Psalms and three times in Habakkuk (3:3, 9, 13). Though its precise use is unknown, the

word was most likely used as a musical sign. Three suggestions for its meaning include: (1) It was a musical direction to the singers and orchestra to play *forte* or *crescendo*. (2) It was a signal to lift up the hands or voice in worship, or to the priest to give a benediction. (3) It was a phrase like "Amen" or "Hallelujah" meaning "so be it" or "may it ever be true."

**3:4** God's holy hill was Mount Moriah in Jerusalem, the place where David's son Solomon would build the Temple. David knew God could not be confined to any space, but he wrote poetically, expressing confidence that God would hear him when he prayed. God responds to us when we earnestly pray to him.

**3:5** Sleep does not come easily during a crisis. David could have had sleepless nights when his son Absalom rebelled and gathered an army to kill him. But he slept peacefully, even during the rebellion. What made the difference? David cried out to the Lord, and the Lord heard him. The assurance of answered prayer brings peace. It is easier to sleep well when we accept with full assurance that God is in control of circumstances. If you are lying awake at night worrying about what you can't change, pour out your heart to God, and thank him that he is in control. Then sleep will come.

<sup>7</sup>Arise, O LORD; save me, O my God: for thou hast smitten all mine enemies *upon* the cheek bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.

<sup>8</sup>Salvation *belongeth* unto the LORD: thy blessing *is* upon thy people. Selah.

**Theme:** Rejoicing in God's protection and peace. We can place our confidence in God, because he will listen when we call on him.

**Author:** David

## 4 *To the chief Musician on Neginoth, A Psalm of David*

<sup>1</sup>Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me *when I was* in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.

<sup>2</sup>O ye sons of men, how long *will ye turn* my glory into shame? *how long* will ye love vanity, *and* seek after leasing? Selah.

<sup>3</sup>But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him.

<sup>4</sup>Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.

<sup>5</sup>Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD.

<sup>6</sup>*There be* many that say, Who will shew us *any* good? LORD, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.

<sup>7</sup>Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time *that* their corn and their wine increased.

<sup>8</sup>I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.

**Theme:** The lies of enemies. God is able to defend us from lies spoken against us.

**Author:** David

## 5 *To the chief Musician upon Nehiloth, A Psalm of David*

<sup>1</sup>Give ear to my words, O LORD, consider my meditation.

<sup>2</sup>Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray.

<sup>3</sup>My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct *my prayer* unto thee, and will look up.

<sup>4</sup>For thou *art* not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee.

<sup>5</sup>The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity.

<sup>6</sup>Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.

**3:7** smitten: struck. **4:1** enlarged: relieved. **4:2** vanity: what is worthless. *leasing*: lies. **4:4** commune with: meditate in. **4:7** corn: grain. **4:8** lay me down: lie down. **5:6** speak leasing: tell lies.

**3:8**  
Pss 28:8; 29:11  
Isa 43:11  
Jer 3:23

**4:1**  
Pss 3:4; 17:6; 18:6,  
18-19; 25:16

**4:2**  
Pss 31:6, 18;  
69:7-10, 19-20

**4:3**  
Pss 6:8-9; 17:6;  
31:23; 50:5; 135:4

**4:4**  
Ps 77:6  
Eph 4:26

**4:5**  
Pss 37:3, 5; 50:14;  
51:19

**4:6**  
Num 6:26  
Job 7:7; 9:25  
Ps 80:3, 7, 19

**4:7**  
Ps 97:11-12  
Acts 14:17

**4:8**  
Lev 25:18  
Deut 12:10  
Job 11:19  
Pss 3:5; 16:9

**5:1**  
Ps 54:2

**5:2**  
Ps 84:3

**5:3**  
Pss 88:13; 130:5

**5:4**  
Pss 11:5; 34:16;  
92:15

**5:5**  
Pss 1:5; 11:5; 45:7;  
75:4

**5:6**  
Pss 52:4-5; 55:23

**3:7** This description of God's anger reveals David's desire for justice against his persecutors. David himself had been slapped and insulted, and here he simply asks for equal treatment for his enemies. He did this not out of personal revenge, but for the sake of God's justice. Verse 8 shows the humility behind David's words—he realized that in God there was a solution to the success the wicked unfairly achieved.

**4:1ff** This psalm may have been written as David was asking his enemies to reconsider their support of Absalom. Others see this psalm as a prayer for relief from a calamity such as a drought (see 4:7). It was probably written shortly after Psalm 3.

**4:2** *Leasing* is sometimes translated as "lies," sometimes as "false gods." In either case, throughout history most people have preferred *vanity*, or delusions, to God's truth.

**4:3** The godly are those who are faithful and devoted to God. David knew that God would hear him when he called and would answer him. We, too, can be confident that God listens and answers when we call on him. Sometimes we think God will not hear us because we have fallen short of his high standards for holy living. But God has forgiven us and he will listen to us. When you feel that your prayers are "bouncing off the ceiling," remember that as a believer you have been set apart by God and that he loves you. He hears and answers (although his answers may not

be what you expect). Look at your problems in the light of God's power instead of looking at God in the shadow of your problems.

**4:5** Worship in David's day included animal sacrifices by the priests in the Tabernacle. The animal's blood "covered" (was a remedy for) the sins of the one who offered the animal. Specific rules had been given for offering sacrifices, but more important to God than ceremony was the offerer's attitude of submission and obedience (1 Samuel 15:22, 23). Today, a pleasing sacrifice to God is still the same—he wants our obedience and our praise before our gifts (Hebrews 13:15). Offer God your sacrifice of total obedience and heartfelt praise.

**4:7** Two kinds of joy are contrasted here—inward joy that comes from knowing and trusting God and happiness that comes as a result of pleasant circumstances. Inward joy is steady as long as we trust in God; happiness is unpredictable. Inward joy defeats discouragement; happiness covers it up. Inward joy is lasting; happiness is temporary.

**5:1-3** The secret of a close relationship with God is to pray to him earnestly *in the morning*. In the morning, our minds are freer from problems, and then we can commit the whole day to God. Regular communication helps any friendship and is certainly necessary for a strong relationship with God. We need to communicate with him daily. Do you have a regular time to pray and read God's Word?

5:7  
Pss 69:13;  
115:11, 13

5:8  
Pss 27:11; 31:1, 3

5:9  
<sup>†</sup>Rom 3:13  
Luke 11:44

5:10  
Pss 9:16; 36:12;  
107:10-11

5:11  
Pss 2:12; 12:7;  
33:1; 64:10  
Isa 65:13

5:12  
Pss 29:11; 32:7, 10

<sup>7</sup>But as for me, I will come *into* thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: *and* in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.

<sup>8</sup>Lead me, O LORD, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face.

<sup>9</sup>For *there is* no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue.

<sup>10</sup>Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against thee.

<sup>11</sup>But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.

<sup>12</sup>For thou, LORD, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as *with* a shield.

**Theme:** Deliverance in trouble. God is able to rescue us.

**Author:** David

## 6

*To the chief Musician on Neginoth upon Sheminith, A Psalm of David*

<sup>1</sup>O LORD, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.

<sup>2</sup>Have mercy upon me, O LORD; for I *am* weak: O LORD, heal me; for my bones are vexed.

5:9 *sepulchre:* tomb. 5:12 *compass:* surround. 6:1 *chasten:* discipline. 6:2 *vexed:* troubled.

6:1  
Pss 2:5; 38:1

6:2  
Ps 22:14

**PSALMS FROM DAVID'S LIFE**  
Of the more than 70 psalms attributed to David, at least 14 of them are connected with specific events in his life. From them we see an outline of a growing relationship with God. They are listed here, roughly in chronological order.

<i>Event in David's life</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Psalm</i>	<i>What David learned about God</i>
When Saul sent troops to David's home to capture him	1 Samuel 19	59	God is my refuge, my God of mercy.
While running from Saul	1 Samuel 21	34	I will praise the Lord no matter what happens.
While running from Saul	1 Samuel 21	56	When I am afraid, I will put my confidence in God.
While hiding in the cave of Adullam	1 Samuel 22	142	God is my only place of refuge. Only he can keep me safe.
After learning Doeg had murdered 85 priests and their families	1 Samuel 22	52	God will strike down evil people . . . destroying forever those who despise God.
When the people of Ziph tried to betray him	1 Samuel 23	54	God is my helper.
While hiding in a cave	1 Samuel 24	57	I will take refuge in the shadow of God's wings until the storm has passed.
While hiding in the wilderness of En-gedi	1 Samuel 24	63	My soul thirsts for God; his right hand holds me securely.
When Saul's pursuit was over	2 Samuel 22	18	To the faithful God shows himself faithful.
After being confronted about his adultery with Bath-sheba	2 Samuel 12	51	The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart he will not ignore.
During Absalom's rebellion	2 Samuel 15	3	Salvation comes from God.
During Absalom's rebellion	2 Samuel 15	7	He is a righteous God who searches hearts and minds and can bring an end to the wicked and make the righteous secure.

**5:4** God cannot condone or excuse even the smallest sin; therefore, we cannot excuse ourselves for sinning only a little bit. As we grow spiritually, our sensitivity to sin increases. What is your reaction to sin in your life? Are you insensitive, unconcerned, disappointed, or comfortable? As God makes us aware of sin, we must be intolerant toward it and be willing to change. All believers should strive to be more tolerant of people but less tolerant of the sin in themselves and others.

**6:1ff** This is the first of seven "penitential" psalms, in which the writer humbly realizes his predicament (usually the result of sin),

expresses sorrow over it, and demonstrates a fresh commitment to remain close to God. We don't know the cause of David's pain, but whatever the cause, he sought God for the remedy.

**6:1-3** David accepted God's punishment, but he begged God not to punish him in anger. Jeremiah also asked God to correct him gently and not in anger (Jeremiah 10:24). David recognized that if God treated him with justice alone and not with mercy, he would be wiped out by God's wrath. Often we want God to show mercy to us and justice to everyone else. In God's kindness, he forgives us instead of giving us what we deserve.

<sup>3</sup>My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O LORD, how long?  
<sup>4</sup>Return, O LORD, deliver my soul: oh save me for thy mercies' sake.  
<sup>5</sup>For in death *there* is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?  
<sup>6</sup>I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears.  
<sup>7</sup>Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies.  
<sup>8</sup>Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for the LORD hath heard the voice of my weeping.  
<sup>9</sup>The LORD hath heard my supplication; the LORD will receive my prayer.  
<sup>10</sup>Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed: let them return *and* be ashamed suddenly.

**6:3**  
Pss 88:3; 90:13  
John 12:27  
**6:4**  
Ps 17:13  
**6:5**  
Ps 30:9  
Isa 38:18  
**6:6**  
Pss 42:3; 69:3  
**6:7**  
Ps 31:9  
**6:10**  
Pss 71:24; 73:19

**Theme:** A request for justice against those who make slanderous comments. God is the perfect judge and will punish those who persecute the innocent.

**Author:** David

**7** *Shiggaion of David, which he sang unto the LORD, concerning the words of Cush the Benjamite*

<sup>1</sup>O LORD my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me:  
<sup>2</sup>Lest he tear my soul like a lion, rending *it* in pieces, while *there* is none to deliver.  
<sup>3</sup>O LORD my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands;  
<sup>4</sup>If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me; (yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy):  
<sup>5</sup>Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take *it*; yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust. Selah.  
<sup>6</sup>Arise, O LORD, in thine anger, lift up thyself because of the rage of mine enemies: and awake for me *to* the judgment *that* thou hast commanded.  
<sup>7</sup>So shall the congregation of the people compass thee about: for their sakes therefore return thou on high.  
<sup>8</sup>The LORD shall judge the people: judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity *that* is in me.  
<sup>9</sup>Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just: for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins.  
<sup>10</sup>My defence *is* of God, which saveth the upright in heart.  
<sup>11</sup>God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry *with* the wicked every day.  
<sup>12</sup>If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready.  
<sup>13</sup>He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors.  
<sup>14</sup>Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood.

**7:1**  
Pss 11:1;  
31:1, 14-15  
**7:2**  
Pss 17:12; 57:4  
**7:3**  
1 Sam 24:11  
**7:4**  
1 Sam 24:7; 26:9  
**7:6**  
Pss 3:7; 35:23;  
94:2; 138:7  
**7:8**  
Pss 18:20; 35:24;  
96:13  
**7:9**  
1 Chr 28:9  
Pss 11:4-5; 34:21;  
94:23  
Jer 11:20  
Rev 2:23  
**7:10**  
Pss 18:2, 30; 97:10-11; 125:4  
**7:11**  
Pss 50:6; 90:9  
**7:12**  
Deut 32:41  
Ps 64:7  
Ezek 33:9  
**7:13**  
Pss 18:14; 45:5;  
64:7  
**7:14**  
Job 15:35  
Isa 59:4  
Jas 1:15

**6:3** *sore vexed:* greatly troubled. **6:6** *make I my bed to swim:* I flood my bed with weeping. **6:7** *is consumed:* wastes away. *waxeth:* grows. **6:9** *supplication:* pleading. **7:2** *rending it:* ripping me. **7:7** *compass:* surround. **7:9** *trieth the hearts and reins:* tests the hearts and minds. **7:12** *whet:* sharpen. **7:14** *travaileth:* is pregnant. *mischief:* trouble.

**6:6** Pouring out his heart with tears, David was completely honest with God. We can be honest with God even if we are filled with anger or despair, because he knows us thoroughly and wants the very best for us. Anger and despair often result in rash outward acts or turning inward in depression. Because we trust in our all-powerful God, we don't have to be victims of circumstance or be weighed down by the guilt of sin. Be honest with God, and he will help you turn your attention from yourself to him and his mercy.

**7:1** *Shiggaion* (see title) is a term from the verb "to err" or "to wander"; it could also mean "wild" or "ecstatic." It is a poem written with intense feeling, a lament to stir the emotions.

**7:1-6** Have you ever been falsely accused or badly hurt and wanted revenge? David wrote this psalm in response to the slanderous accusations of those who claimed he was trying to kill Saul and seize the throne (1 Samuel 24:9-11). Instead of taking matters into his own hands and striking back, David cried out to God for justice. The proper response to slander is prayer, not revenge, because God says, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay" (Romans

12:19; see also Deuteronomy 32:35, 36; Hebrews 10:30). Instead of striking back, ask God to take your case, bring justice, and restore your reputation.

**7:9** "The hearts and reins." literally *kidneys*, means the deepest thoughts and feelings. Nothing is hidden from God—this can be either terrifying or comforting. Our thoughts are an open book to him. Because God knows even our motives, we have no place to hide, no way to pretend we can get away with sin. But that very knowledge also gives us great comfort. We don't have to impress God or put up a front. Instead, we can trust God to help us work through our particular weaknesses in order to serve him as he has planned. If we truly follow him, God rewards our effort.

**7:14-16** When allowed to run its course, evil destroys itself. Violent people become victims of violence, and liars become victims of others' deceit (9:15, 16). In the process, however, innocent people are hurt. Sometimes God intervenes and stops evildoers in their tracks in order to protect his followers. At other times, for reasons known only to him, God allows evil to



7:15  
Job 4:7-8  
Ps 57:6

7:16  
Esth 9:24-25  
Ps 140:9, 11

7:17  
Pss 9:2; 66:1-2, 4;  
71:15-16

<sup>15</sup>He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch *which* he made.

<sup>16</sup>His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate.

<sup>17</sup>I will praise the LORD according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the LORD most high.

**Theme:** The greatness of God assures the worth of mankind. God, the all-powerful Creator, cares for his most valuable creation—people.

**Author:** David

## 8 *To the chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm of David*

8:1  
Pss 57:5, 11; 66:2;  
113:4; 148:13

8:2  
Matt 21:16

8:3  
Pss 89:11; 136:9

8:4  
Job 7:17  
Ps 144:3  
Heb 2:6-8

8:5  
Pss 21:5; 82:6;  
103:4

8:6  
Gen 1:26, 28  
1 Cor 15:27

<sup>1</sup>O LORD our Lord, how excellent *is* thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.

<sup>2</sup>Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

<sup>3</sup>When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

<sup>4</sup>What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

<sup>5</sup>For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

<sup>6</sup>Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all *things* under his feet:

<sup>7</sup>All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;

<sup>8</sup>The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, *and whatsoever* passeth through the paths of the seas.

<sup>9</sup>O LORD our Lord, how excellent *is* thy name in all the earth!

**Theme:** God never ignores our cries for help.

**Author:** David, probably written after a victory over the Philistines

## 9 *To the chief Musician upon Muth-labben, A Psalm of David*

9:1  
Pss 26:7; 86:12

9:2  
Pss 66:2, 4; 92:1;  
104:34

9:3  
Pss 27:2; 56:9

<sup>1</sup>I will praise *thee*, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will shew forth all thy marvellous works.

<sup>2</sup>I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High.

<sup>3</sup>When mine enemies are turned back, they shall fall and perish at thy presence.

7:16 *pate:* head.

continue even though innocent people are hurt. It is during these times that we, like David, must ask God to protect us. Remember that God will execute final justice, even if it is not during our earthly lives.

**7:17** During a time of great evil and injustice, David was grateful that God was righteous (see also 7:11). When we wonder if anyone is honest or fair, we can be assured that God will continue to bring justice and fairness when we involve him in our activities. If you ever feel you are being treated unfairly, ask the one who is always fair and just to be with you, and then thank him for his presence (see Isaiah 42:1–6).

**8:1ff** Portions of this psalm are quoted in the New Testament and applied to Christ (1 Corinthians 15:27; Hebrews 2:6–8). Jesus became a man who was a little lower than the angels (8:5), and he will raise all who belong to him above the angels when he comes to reign over the new heavens and new earth. Jesus is the only man who perfectly reflects God's image (Galatians 2:20; Colossians 1:15).

**8:2** Children are able to trust and praise God without doubts or reservations. As we get older, many of us find this more and more difficult to do. Ask God to give you childlike faith, removing any barriers to having a closer walk with him.

**8:3, 4** To respect God's majesty, we must compare ourselves to his greatness. When we look at creation, we often feel small by comparison. This is a healthy way to get back to reality, but God

does not want us to dwell on our smallness. Humility means proper respect for God, not self-deprecation.

**8:3–5** When we look at the vast expanse of creation, we wonder how God could be concerned for people who constantly disappoint him. Yet God created us only a little lower than the angels—and some translations even say, “a little lower than God”! The next time you question your worth as a person or feel down about yourself, remember that God considers you highly valuable. We have great worth because we bear the stamp of the Creator. (See Genesis 1:26, 27 for the extent of worth God places on all people.) Because God has already declared how valuable we are to him, we can be set free from feelings of worthlessness.

**8:6** God gave human beings tremendous authority—to be in charge of the whole earth. But with great authority comes great responsibility. If we own a pet, we have the legal authority to do with it as we wish, but we also have the responsibility to feed and care for it. How do you treat God's creation? Use your resources wisely because God holds you accountable as his steward.

**9:1ff** Praise is expressing to God our appreciation and understanding of his worth. It is saying “thank you” for each aspect of his divine nature. Our inward attitude becomes outward expression. When we praise God, we help ourselves by expanding our awareness of who he is. In each psalm you read, look for an attribute or characteristic of God for which you can thank him.

4 For thou hast maintained my right and my cause; thou satest in the throne judging right.

5 Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever.

6 O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end: and thou hast destroyed cities; their memorial is perished with them.

7 But the LORD shall endure for ever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment.

8 And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness.

9 The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.

10 And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.

11 Sing praises to the LORD, which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people his doings.

12 When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them: he forgetteth not the cry of the humble.

13 Have mercy upon me, O LORD; consider my trouble *which I suffer* of them that hate me, thou that liftest me up from the gates of death:

14 That I may shew forth all thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion: I will rejoice in thy salvation.

15 The heathen are sunk down in the pit *that* they made: in the net which they hid is their own foot taken.

16 The LORD is known *by* the judgment *which* he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Higgaion. Selah.

17 The wicked shall be turned into hell, *and* all the nations that forget God.

18 For the needy shall not alway be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall *not* perish for ever.

19 Arise, O LORD; let not man prevail: let the heathen be judged in thy sight.

20 Put them in fear, O LORD: *that* the nations may know themselves *to be but* men. Selah.

9:4  
Pss 47:8; 140:12  
1 Pet 2:23

9:5  
Pss 69:28; 119:21

9:6  
Pss 34:16; 40:15

9:7  
Pss 10:16;  
89:14-15

9:8  
Ps 96:13

9:9  
Pss 18:2; 37:39;  
59:9; 16-17

9:10  
Pss 37:28; 91:14;  
94:14

9:11  
Pss 76:2; 105:1

9:12  
Gen 9:5-6  
Ps 72:14

9:13  
Pss 30:3; 38:19;  
86:13

9:14  
Pss 13:5; 20:5;  
35:9; 51:12; 106:2

9:15  
Pss 7:15; 35:8

9:17  
Pss 49:14; 50:22

9:18  
Pss 9:12; 62:5; 71:5

9:19  
Num 10:35  
2 Chr 14:11

**Theme:** Why do the wicked succeed? Although God may seem to be hidden at times, we can be assured that he is aware of every injustice.

**Author:** Anonymous, but probably David. Many ancient manuscripts combine Psalms 9 and 10, and Psalm 9 was written by David.

**10** 1 Why standest thou afar off, O LORD? *why* hidest thou *thyself* in times of trouble?

2 The wicked in *his* pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.

3 For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, *whom* the LORD abhorreth.

10:1  
Pss 13:1; 22:1; 55:1

10:2  
Pss 7:15; 9:16;  
73:6, 8

10:3  
Pss 49:6; 94:3-4

9:4 *satest in:* sat on. 9:5 *heathen:* nations. 9:16 *judgment:* justice. *higgaion:* meditation. 10:2 *devices:* schemes. *imagined:* devised.

**9:4** God maintains our right; he is our vindicator (one who clears us from criticism and justifies us before others). In this life, we may face many injustices: (1) we may be falsely accused and misunderstood by friends and enemies; (2) we may not truly be appreciated by others for the love we show; (3) the true value of our work and service may not be duly rewarded; (4) our ideas may be ignored. But God is to be praised, for he sees and remembers all the good we do, and it is up to him to decide the timing and the appropriateness of our rewards. If we do not trust him to vindicate us, then we are susceptible to hatred and self-pity. If we do trust him, we can experience God's peace and be free from the worry of how others perceive us and treat us.

**9:10** God will never forsake those who trust in him. To forsake someone is to abandon that person. God's promise does not mean that if we trust in him we will escape loss or suffering; it means that God himself will never leave us no matter what we face.

**9:11** God does not live only in Zion (another name for Mount Moriah, the hill on which the Temple was built); he is everywhere all the time. The focal point of Israelite worship, however, came to be Jerusalem and its beautiful Temple. God was present in the Tabernacle (Exodus 25:8, 9) and in the Temple built by Solomon (2 Chronicles 7:16). From this central place of worship, the Jews were to tell the world about the one true God.

**9:13, 14** All of us want God to help us when we are in trouble, but often for different reasons. Some want God's help so that they will be successful and other people will like them. Others want God's help so that they will be comfortable and feel good about themselves. David, however, wanted help from God so that justice would be restored to Israel and so that he could show others God's power. When you call to God for help, consider your motive. Is it to save yourself pain and embarrassment or to bring God glory and honor?

**9:18** The world may ignore the plight of the needy, crushing any earthly hope they may have. But God, the champion of the weak and needy, promises that this will not be the case forever. Wicked nations that forget the Lord and refuse to help their people will be judged by God. He knows our needs, he knows our tendency to despair, and he has promised to care for us (see also 9:9, 12). Even when others forget us, he will remember.

**10:1** To the psalm writer, God seemed far away. "Why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?" he asked God. But even though he had honest doubts, he did not stop praying or assume that God no longer cared. He was not complaining, but simply asking God to hurry to his aid. It is during those times when we feel most alone or oppressed that we need to keep praying, telling God about our troubles.

**10:4**  
Pss 14:1; 36:1-2

**10:5**  
Pss 28:5; 52:7

**10:6**  
Pss 30:6-7; 49:11

**10:7**  
Pss 59:12; 73:8;  
140:3  
†Rom 3:14

**10:8**  
Pss 11:2; 94:6-7

**10:9**  
Pss 10:2; 17:12;  
59:3; 140:5

**10:11**  
Ps 10:4

**10:12**  
Pss 9:12; 17:7

**10:14**  
Pss 9:12; 22:9-11;  
37:5

**10:15**  
Pss 37:17; 140:11

**10:16**  
Deut 8:20  
Ps 29:10

**10:17**  
Pss 9:18; 34:15;  
145:19

**10:18**  
Pss 9:9; 74:21;  
146:9  
Isa 29:20

<sup>4</sup>The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek *after God*: God is not in all his thoughts.

<sup>5</sup>His ways are always grievous; thy judgments *are* far above out of his sight: *as for* all his enemies, he puffeth at them.

<sup>6</sup>He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for *I shall never be* in adversity.

<sup>7</sup>His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue *is* mischief and vanity.

<sup>8</sup>He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages: in the secret places doth he murder the innocent: his eyes are privily set against the poor.

<sup>9</sup>He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den: he lieth in wait to catch the poor: he doth catch the poor, when he draweth him into his net.

<sup>10</sup>He croucheth, *and* humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones.

<sup>11</sup>He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see *it*.

<sup>12</sup>Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up thine hand: forget not the humble.

<sup>13</sup>Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God? he hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not requite *it*.

<sup>14</sup>Thou hast seen *it*; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite *it* with thy hand: the poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless.

<sup>15</sup>Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil *man*: seek out his wickedness *till* thou find none.

<sup>16</sup>The LORD *is* King for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of his land.

<sup>17</sup>LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear:

<sup>18</sup>To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress.

**Theme:** God's rule provides stability in the midst of panic. Because we can trust him, we can face our problems.

**Author:** David

## 11 *To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David*

**11:1**  
Ps 121:1-2

**11:2**  
Pss 7:12; 64:3-4

**11:3**  
Ps 82:5

**11:4**  
Pss 34:15-16;  
103:19

<sup>1</sup>In the LORD put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee *as* a bird to your mountain?

<sup>2</sup>For, lo, the wicked bend *their* bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart.

<sup>3</sup>If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?

<sup>4</sup>The LORD *is* in his holy temple, the LORD's throne *is* in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.

**10:7** *fraud*: oppression. *mischief*: trouble. *vanity*: wickedness. **10:8** *are privily set against*: secretly watch for. **10:13** *contemn*: renounce. **10:14** *requite*: repay. **11:2** *lo*: look. *privily*: secretly. **11:4** *try*: test.

**10:4-6** Some people succeed in everything they do, and they brag that no one, not even God, can keep them down. We may wonder why God allows these people to amass great wealth while they despise him as they do. But why are we upset when the wicked prosper? Are we angry about the damage they are doing, or just jealous of their success? To answer these questions, we must gain the right perspective on wickedness and wealth. The wicked will surely be punished because God hates their evil deeds (7:11). Wealth is only temporary. It is not necessarily a sign of God's approval on a person's life; nor is lack of it a sign of God's disapproval. Don't let wealth, or lack of it, become your obsession. See Proverbs 30:8, 9 for a prayer you can pray about money.

**10:11** There is an incompatibility between blind arrogance and the presence of God in our hearts. Proud people depend on themselves rather than on God. This causes God's guiding influences to leave their lives. When God's presence is welcome, there is no room for pride, because he makes us aware of our true selves.

**10:14** God sees and takes note of each evil deed, hears our cries, and comforts our hearts (10:17). His presence is always with us. We can face the wicked because we do not face them alone. God is by our side.

**11:1-4** David was forced to flee for safety several times. Being God's anointed king did not make him immune to injustice and hatred from others. He may have written this psalm when he was being hunted by Saul (1 Samuel 18—31) or during the days of Absalom's rebellion (2 Samuel 15—18). In both instances, David fled, but not as if all was lost. He knew God was in control. While David wisely avoided trouble, he did not fearfully run away from his troubles.

**11:1-4** David's faith contrasts dramatically with the fear of his advisers. Faith in God keeps us from losing hope and helps us resist fear. David's advisers were afraid because they saw only frightening circumstances and crumbling foundations. David was comforted and optimistic because he knew God was greater than anything his enemies could bring against him (7:10; 16:1; 31:2, 3).

**11:4** When the foundations are shaking and you wish you could hide, remember that God is still in control. His power is not diminished by any turn of events. Nothing happens without his knowledge and permission. When you feel like running away—run to God. He will restore justice and goodness on the earth in his good time.

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**13:4**  
Pss 25:2; 38:16

**13:5**  
Pss 9:14; 52:8

**13:6**  
Ps 116:7

**14:1-7**  
/Ps 53:1-6

<sup>4</sup>Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; *and* those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved.

<sup>5</sup>But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.

<sup>6</sup>I will sing unto the LORD, because he hath dealt bountifully with me.

**Theme:** Only the fool denies God. How foolish it must seem to God when people say there is no God.

**Author:** David

## 14

*To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David*

**14:1**  
Pss 10:4; 53:1  
†Rom 3:10-12

**14:2**  
Pss 33:13-15;  
102:19

**14:3**  
Pss 58:3; 143:2

**14:4**  
Isa 64:7

**14:6**  
Pss 9:9; 40:17

**14:7**  
Job 42:10  
Pss 53:6; 85:1-2

<sup>1</sup>The fool hath said in his heart, *There is no God*. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, *there is none that doeth good*.

<sup>2</sup>The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, *and seek God*.

<sup>3</sup>They are all gone aside, they are *all* together become filthy: *there is none that doeth good, no, not one*.

<sup>4</sup>Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people *as they eat bread*, and call not upon the LORD.

<sup>5</sup>There were they in great fear: for God *is* in the generation of the righteous.

<sup>6</sup>Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the LORD *is* his refuge.

<sup>7</sup>Oh that the salvation of Israel *were come* out of Zion! when the LORD bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, *and Israel shall be glad*.

### TROUBLES AND COMPLAINTS IN PSALMS

We can relate to the psalms because they express our feelings. We all face troubles, as did the psalm writers hundreds of years ago, and we often respond as they did. In Psalm 3, David told God how he felt about the odds against him. But within three verses, the king realized that God's presence and care made the odds meaningless. This experience is repeated in many of the psalms. Usually, the hope and confidence in God outweigh the fear and suffering; sometimes they do not. Still, the psalm writers consistently poured out their thoughts and emotions to God. When they felt abandoned by God, they told him so. When they were impatient with how slowly God seemed to be answering their prayers, they also told him so. Because they recognized the difference between themselves and God, they were free to be human and to be honest with their Creator. That is why so many of the dark psalms end in the light. The psalm writers started by expressing their feelings and ended up remembering to whom they were speaking!

Although we have much in common with these writers, we may differ in two ways: We might not tell God what we are really thinking and feeling; therefore, we also might not recognize, even faintly, who is listening to our prayers!

Notice this pattern as you read Psalms, and put the writers' insight to the test. You may well find that your awareness and appreciation of God will grow as you are honest with him. (See Psalms 3, 6, 13, 31, 37, 64, 77, 102, 121, and 142.)

**13:5, 6** David was faithful to God and trusted wholeheartedly in him, but he felt the pressure of his problems as much as anyone. Instead of giving up or giving in, however, David held on to his faith. In times of despair, it is much harder to hold on than to give up. But if you give up on God, you give in to a life of despair.

**14:1-3** The true atheist is either foolish or wicked—foolish because he ignores the evidence that God exists, or wicked because he refuses to live by God's truths. We become atheists in practice when we rely more on ourselves than on God. The fools mentioned here are aggressively perverse in their actions. To speak in direct defiance of God is utterly foolish according to the Bible.

**14:3** No one but God is perfect; all of us stand guilty before him (see Romans 3:23) and need his forgiveness. No matter how well we perform or what we achieve compared to others, none of us can boast of his or her goodness when compared to God's standard. God not only expects us to obey his laws, but he wants us to love him with all our heart. No one except Jesus Christ has done that perfectly. Since we all fall short we must turn to Christ to save us (Romans 10:9-11).

**14:3, 4** David applies these observations to his enemies, the godless evildoers who "eat up my people as they eat bread" (14:4); "they are all gone aside . . . there is none that doeth good" (14:3). By contrast, David said, "Thou hast proved mine heart; . . . thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing" (17:3).

There is a clear distinction between those who worship God and those who refuse to worship him. David worshiped God, and under his leadership Israel obeyed God and prospered. Several hundred years later, however, Israel had forgotten God. It was difficult to distinguish between God's followers and those who worshiped idols. When Isaiah called Israel to repentance, he, like David, spoke of people who had strayed away (Isaiah 53:6). But Isaiah was talking about the Israelites themselves. Paul quoted Psalm 14 in Romans 3:10-12. He made the image of straying sheep even more general. The whole human race—Jew and Gentile alike—has strayed from God.

**14:5** If God is "in the generation of the righteous," then those who attack God's followers may be attacking God. To attack God is utterly futile (see 2:4, 5, 10-12). Thus, while we may feel we are losing the battle, we can be absolutely sure that our ultimate victory is in God.

**Theme:** Guidelines for living a blameless life

**Author:** David

## 15 *A Psalm of David*

<sup>1</sup> LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?

<sup>2</sup> He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.

<sup>3</sup> *He that* backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.

<sup>4</sup> In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. *He that* sweareth to *his own* hurt, and changeth not.

<sup>5</sup> *He that* putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. *He that* doeth these *things* shall never be moved.

**15:1**  
Pss 24:3; 27:5-6

**15:2**  
Ps 24:4  
Eph 4:25

**15:3**  
Exod 23:1  
Ps 28:3

**15:4**  
Judg 11:35  
Acts 28:10

**15:5**  
Exod 22:25; 23:8  
Deut 16:19

**Theme:** The joys and benefits of a life lived in companionship with God. We enjoy these benefits now and eternally.

**Author:** David

## 16 *Michtam of David*

<sup>1</sup> Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust.

<sup>2</sup> *O my soul*, thou hast said unto the LORD, Thou *art* my LORD: my goodness *extendeth* not to thee;

<sup>3</sup> *But* to the saints that *are* in the earth, and *to* the excellent, in whom *is* all my delight.

<sup>4</sup> Their sorrows shall be multiplied *that* hasten *after* another *god*: their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips.

<sup>5</sup> The LORD *is* the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot.

<sup>6</sup> The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant *places*; yea, I have a goodly heritage.

<sup>7</sup> I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons.

<sup>8</sup> I have set the LORD always before me: because *he is* at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

**16:1**  
Pss 7:1; 17:8

**16:2**  
Ps 73:25

**16:3**  
Pss 101:6; 119:63

**16:4**  
Exod 23:13  
Josh 23:7  
Pss 32:10;  
106:37-38

**16:6**  
Ps 78:55  
Jer 3:19

**16:7**  
Pss 73:24; 77:6

**16:8**  
Pss 27:8; 73:23;  
110:5; 123:1-2

**15:4** *contemned*: despised. **15:5** *to usury*: at interest. *taketh reward*: accepts a bribe. **16:6** *goodly heritage*: beautiful inheritance. **16:7** *reins*: heart. *in the night seasons*: at night.

**15:1ff** God calls his people to live holy lives and, in this psalm, gives us ten standards to determine how we are doing. We live in the midst of evil people whose standards and morals are eroding. Our standards for living do not come from our evil society, but from God. Other standards for conduct are found in Isaiah 33:15; 56:1; Micah 6:8; Habakkuk 2:4; and Mark 12:29–31.

**15:1** *Tabernacle* and *holy hill* are interchangeable words describing the focal point of Israelite worship—the dwelling place of God. In Hebrew poetry the repeating pattern is found more in the thought than in the sound or rhythm.

**15:2–5** As we grow in our relationship with our Redeemer, we develop a desire to live by his standards. The depth of our eternal relationship with him can often be measured by the way we reflect his standards in our daily activities.

**15:3, 4** Words are powerful, and how you use them reflects on your relationship with God. Perhaps nothing so identifies Christians as their ability to control their speech—refusing to slander, ignoring gossip, speaking out against sin, and guiding the faithful. Watch out for what you say. (See James 3:1–12 for more on the importance of controlling your tongue.)

**15:5** “Usury” is charging interest. God was against the Jews’ charging interest or making a profit on loans to needy fellow Jews (see also Exodus 22:25; Leviticus 25:35–37), although charging interest on loans to foreigners was allowed (Deuteronomy 23:20). Interest was also permitted for business purposes, as long as it wasn’t excessive (Proverbs 28:8).

**15:5** Some people are so obsessed with money that they will change their God-given standards and lifestyle to get it. If money is a controlling force in your life, it must be curbed, or it will harm others and destroy your relationship with God.

**15:5** As we grow in our relationship with our Redeemer, we develop a desire to live by his standards. The depth of our eternal relationship with him can often be measured by the way we reflect his standards in our daily activities.

**16:1** *Michtam* (see title) comes from a term that may mean “to cover.” It could mean a covering of the lips, a silent prayer, or a prayer to be covered (a plea for protection).

**16:2** “My goodness extendeth not to thee” could also be translated, “apart from you I have no good thing.”

**16:7, 8** It is human nature to make our own plans and *then* ask God to bless them. Instead, we should seek God’s will first. By constantly thinking about the Lord and his way of living, we will gain insights that will help us make right decisions and live the way God desires. By communicating with him, we allow him to counsel us and give us wisdom.

**16:8** God does not exempt believers from the day-to-day circumstances of life. Believers and unbelievers alike experience pain, trouble, and failure at times (Matthew 5:45). David was talking about the unique sense of security felt by believers. Unbelievers have a sense of hopelessness about life and confusion over their true purpose on earth. Those who seek after God, however, can move ahead confidently with what they know is right and important in God’s eyes, knowing that he will keep them from being moved out of the path he has chosen for them.

**16:8–11** This psalm is often called a messianic psalm because it is quoted in the New Testament as referring to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Both Peter and Paul quoted from this psalm when speaking of Christ’s bodily resurrection (see Acts 2:25–28, 31; 13:35–37).



**16:10**  
Pss 49:15; 86:13  
†Acts 2:25-28;  
13:35  
**16:11**  
Ps 36:7-8

<sup>9</sup>Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.  
<sup>10</sup>For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.  
<sup>11</sup>Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence *is* fulness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore.

**Theme:** A plea for justice in the face of false accusations and persecution. David urges us to realize the true goal of life—to know God—and the true reward of life—to see God one day.

**Author:** David, written while he was being persecuted by Saul

## 17 *A prayer of David*

**17:1**  
Pss 61:1; 88:2;  
142:6  
**17:2**  
Pss 98:8-9; 99:4;  
103:6  
**17:3**  
Job 23:10  
Pss 26:1-2; 39:1;  
66:10  
Jer 50:20  
**17:4**  
Pss 10:5-11; 119:9,  
101  
**17:5**  
Pss 18:36;  
37:30-31; 44:18  
**17:8**  
Deut 32:10  
Ruth 2:12  
Pss 36:7; 91:1, 4  
**17:10**  
1 Sam 2:3  
Pss 31:18; 73:7-8  
**17:11**  
Pss 37:14; 88:17  
**17:12**  
Pss 7:2; 10:9  
**17:13**  
Ps 22:20  
**17:14**  
Ps 73:3-7

<sup>1</sup>Hear the right, O LORD, attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer, *that goeth* not out of feigned lips.

<sup>2</sup>Let my sentence come forth from thy presence; let thine eyes behold the things that are equal.

<sup>3</sup>Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited *me* in the night; thou hast tried me, *and* shalt find nothing; I am purposed *that* my mouth shall not transgress.

<sup>4</sup>Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept *me from* the paths of the destroyer.

<sup>5</sup>Hold up my goings in thy paths, *that* my footsteps slip not.

<sup>6</sup>I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me, O God: incline thine ear unto me, *and hear* my speech.

<sup>7</sup>Shew thy marvellous lovingkindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust *in thee* from those that rise up *against them*.

<sup>8</sup>Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings,  
<sup>9</sup>From the wicked that oppress me, *from* my deadly enemies, *who* compass me about.

<sup>10</sup>They are inclosed in their own fat: with their mouth they speak proudly.

<sup>11</sup>They have now compassed us in our steps: they have set their eyes bowing down to the earth;

<sup>12</sup>Like as a lion *that is* greedy of his prey, and as it were a young lion lurking in secret places.

<sup>13</sup>Arise, O LORD, disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, *which is* thy sword:

<sup>14</sup>From men *which are* thy hand, O LORD, from men of the world, *which have* their portion in *this* life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid *treasure*: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their *substance* to their babes.

**16:10** *suffer:* allow. *corruption:* decay. **17:1** *feigned:* deceitful. **17:3** *tried:* tested. **17:6** *incline thine ear unto:* listen to. **17:9** *compass:* surround. **17:14** *substance:* wealth.

**16:9** David found the secret to joy. True joy is far deeper than happiness; we can feel joy in spite of our deepest troubles. Happiness is temporary because it is based on external circumstances, but joy is lasting because it is based on God's presence within us. As we contemplate his daily presence, we will find contentment. As we understand the future he has for us, we will experience joy.

**16:10** David stated confidently that God would not leave him in the grave or among the dead. Many people fear death because they can neither control nor understand it. As believers, we can be assured that God will not forget us when we die. He will bring us to life again to live with him forever. This provides *real* security. For other passages about resurrection, see Job 19:25, 26; Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2, 13; Mark 13:27; 1 Corinthians 15:12-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 20:11-21:4.

**17:3** Was David saying he was sinless? David's claim was not a proud assumption of purity; it was an understanding of his relationship with God. In Psalms 32 and 51, David freely acknowledged his own sins. Nevertheless, his relationship with God was one of close fellowship and constant repentance and forgiveness. His claim to goodness, therefore, came from his continual seeking after God.

**17:8** Just as we protect our eyes, it is right to pray, as David did, for God to protect us. We must not conclude, however, that we have somehow missed God's protection if we experience troubles. God's protection has far greater purposes than helping us avoid pain; it is to make us better servants for him. God often protects us by guiding us through circumstances, not by helping us escape them.

**17:8** The "shadow of thy wings" is a figure of speech symbolizing God's protection. He guards us just as a mother bird protects her young by covering them with her wings. Moses used a similar metaphor in Deuteronomy 32:11.

**17:13-15** We deceive ourselves when we measure our happiness or contentment in life by the amount of wealth we possess. When we put riches at the top of our value system, their power, pleasure, and security overshadow the eternal value of our relationship with God. We think we will be happy or content when we get riches, only to discover that they don't really satisfy and the pleasures fade away. The true measurement of happiness or contentment is found in God's love and in doing his will. You will find true happiness if you put your relationship with God above earthly riches.

<sup>15</sup>As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

**17:15**  
Pss 4:6-7; 16:11;  
140:13

**Theme:** Gratitude for deliverance and victory. The only sure way to be delivered from surrounding evil is to call upon God for help and strength.

**Author:** David

**18** *To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, the servant of the LORD, who spake unto the LORD the words of this song in the day that the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul: And he said,*

**18:TITLE**  
/2 Sam 22:1-51

<sup>1</sup>I will love thee, O LORD, my strength.

**18:1**  
Ps 59:17

<sup>2</sup>The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.

**18:2**  
1 Sam 2:2  
Pss 19:14; 28:1;  
59:9, 11; 71:3;  
75:10; 144:2

<sup>3</sup>I will call upon the LORD, *who is worthy* to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.

<sup>4</sup>The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid.

**18:3**  
Num 10:9  
Pss 34:6; 96:4

<sup>5</sup>The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me.

<sup>6</sup>In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, *even* into his ears.

**18:4**  
Pss 69:1-2; 116:3;  
124:2-5

<sup>7</sup>Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth.

**18:5**  
Ps 116:3

<sup>8</sup>There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it.

**18:6**  
Pss 3:4; 34:15

<sup>9</sup>He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness *was* under his feet.

**18:7**  
Ps 114:4, 6-7

<sup>10</sup>And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind.

**18:9**  
Exod 20:21  
Pss 97:2; 144:5

<sup>11</sup>He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him *were* dark waters and thick clouds of the skies.

**18:10**  
Pss 80:1; 99:1

<sup>12</sup>At the brightness *that was* before him his thick clouds passed, hail stones and coals of fire.

**18:12**  
Pss 97:2; 104:1-2

<sup>13</sup>The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire.

**18:13**  
Pss 29:3; 104:7-8

<sup>14</sup>Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them.

**18:14**  
Ps 144:6

<sup>15</sup>Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.

**18:15**  
Exod 15:8  
Ps 106:9

<sup>16</sup>He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters.

**18:16**  
Ps 144:7

<sup>17</sup>He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me.

**18:17**  
Ps 35:10

<sup>18</sup>They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the LORD was my stay.

**18:18**  
Pss 16:8; 59:16

<sup>19</sup>He brought me forth also into a large place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me.

**18:19**  
Pss 31:8; 37:23;  
41:1, 11; 118:5

**18:2** *buckler:* shield. *high tower:* stronghold. **18:4** *compassed:* entangled. **18:5** *compassed me about:* surrounded me. *prevented:* confronted. **18:7** *wroth:* angry. **18:10** *cherub:* mighty angel. **18:14** *discomfited:* defeated. **18:15** *discovered:* uncovered. **18:18** *prevented:* confronted. *stay:* support. **18:19** *large:* broad.

**17:15** The word *awake* shows that David believed in life after death. Although belief in resurrection was not widespread in Old Testament times, several verses show that it was partially understood. Some of these are Job 19:25-27; Psalms 16:10; 49:15; 139:17, 18; Isaiah 26:19; and Daniel 12:2, 13.

**18:1ff** This psalm is almost a duplicate of 2 Samuel 22. It may have been written toward the end of David's life when there was peace. God is praised for his glorious works and blessings through the years.

**18:2, 3** God's protection of his people is limitless and can take many forms. David characterized God's care with five military symbols. God is like (1) a *rock* that can't be moved by any who would harm us, (2) a *fortress* or place of safety where the enemy can't follow, (3) a *buckler*, or shield, that comes between us and harm, (4) a *horn* of salvation, a symbol of might and power, (5) a *tower* high above our enemies. If you need protection, look to God.

**18:10** A cherub is a divine being that may belong to one of the ranks of angels. One of the functions of the cherubim was to

serve as guardians. Angels guarded the entrances to both the tree of life (Genesis 3:24) and the Most Holy Place (Exodus 26:31-33). Two cherubim of beaten gold were part of the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25:18-22). The living creatures carrying God's throne in Ezekiel 1 may have been cherubim.

**18:13** "The Highest" was an important designation for David to make. Heathen idol worship was deeply rooted in the land, and each region had its own deity. But these images of wood and stone were powerless. David was placing the Lord alone in a superior category: He is by far the Highest.

**18:16** Troubles, like "many waters," can threaten to drown us. David, helpless and weak, knew that God alone had rescued him from his enemies when he was defenseless. How often we wish God would quickly rescue us out of our troubles. Remember that God can either deliver us or help us remain steady as we go through troubles (18:18). Either way, his protection is best for us. When you feel as though you are drowning in troubles, ask God to help you, hold you steady, and protect you. In his care, you are never helpless.

**18:20**  
Pss 7:8; 24:4

<sup>20</sup>The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.

**18:21**  
2 Chr 34:33  
Pss 37:34; 119:33,  
102-103

<sup>21</sup>For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God.  
<sup>22</sup>For all his judgments *were* before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me.

<sup>23</sup>I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity.

<sup>24</sup>Therefore hath the LORD recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his eyesight.

**18:25**  
Pss 62:12  
Matt 5:7

<sup>25</sup>With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright;

<sup>26</sup>With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward.

**18:27**  
Pss 72:12; 101:5  
Prov 6:16-19

<sup>27</sup>For thou wilt save the afflicted people; but wilt bring down high looks.

**18:28**  
Job 18:6  
Ps 27:1

<sup>28</sup>For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.

<sup>29</sup>For by thee I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall.

**18:29**  
Ps 118:10-12  
2 Cor 12:9

<sup>30</sup>As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.

**18:30**  
Pss 12:6; 19:7

<sup>31</sup>For who is God save the LORD? or who is a rock save our God?

<sup>32</sup>It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect.

**18:31**  
Deut 32:31, 39  
Pss 62:2; 86:8-10

<sup>33</sup>He maketh my feet like hinds' feet, and setteth me upon my high places.

<sup>34</sup>He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.

**18:32**  
Isa 45:5

<sup>35</sup>Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great.

**18:33**  
Deut 32:13  
Hab 3:19

<sup>36</sup>Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip.

**18:35**  
Pss 33:20; 63:8;  
119:117

<sup>37</sup>I have pursued mine enemies, and overtaken them: neither did I turn again till they were consumed.

**18:36**  
Pss 31:8; 66:9

<sup>38</sup>I have wounded them that they were not able to rise: they are fallen under my feet.

**18:37**  
Ps 44:5

<sup>39</sup>For thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle: thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me.

**18:38**  
Pss 36:12; 47:3

<sup>40</sup>Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies; that I might destroy them that hate me.

**18:40**  
Pss 21:12; 94:23

<sup>41</sup>They cried, but *there was* none to save *them*: *even* unto the LORD, but he answered them not.

**18:41**  
Ps 50:22

<sup>42</sup>Then did I beat them small as the dust before the wind: I did cast them out as the dirt in the streets.

**18:42**  
Ps 83:13

<sup>43</sup>Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people; *and* thou hast made me the head of the heathen: a people *whom* I have not known shall serve me.

**18:43**  
2 Sam 3:1  
Ps 89:27  
Isa 55:5

<sup>44</sup>As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me: the strangers shall submit themselves unto me.

**18:44**  
Ps 66:3

<sup>45</sup>The strangers shall fade away, and be afraid out of their close places.

**18:47**  
Pss 47:3; 94:1-2;  
144:2

<sup>46</sup>The LORD liveth; and blessed *be* my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted.  
<sup>47</sup>It is God that avengeth me, and subdueth the people under me.

**18:20** *recompensed*: rewarded. **18:26** *froward* thou wilt shew thyself *froward*: crooked you will show yourself shrewd. **18:27** *high looks*: haughty eyes. **18:30** *tried*: proven. *buckler*: shield. **18:31** *save*: except. **18:32** *girdeth*: arms. **18:33** *hinds'*: deer. **18:34** *steel*: bronze. **18:35** *holden*: held. **18:36** *steps*: path. **18:43** *heathen*: nations. **18:45** *close places*: strongholds.

**18:30** Some people think that belief in God is a crutch for weak people who cannot make it on their own. God is indeed a buckler (shield) to protect us when we are too weak to face certain trials by ourselves, but he does not want us to remain weak. He strengthens, protects, and guides us in order to send us back into an evil world to fight for him. Then he continues to work with us, because the strongest person on earth is infinitely weaker than God and needs his help. David was not a coward; he was a mighty warrior who, with all his armies and weapons, knew that only God could ultimately protect and save him.

**18:32-34** God doesn't promise to eliminate challenges; instead, he promises to give us strength to meet those challenges. If he gave us no rough roads to walk, no mountains to climb, and no battles to fight, we would not grow. He does not leave us alone with our challenges, however. Instead he stands beside us, teaches us, and strengthens us to face them.

**18:40-42** David was a merciful man. He spared the lives of Saul (1 Samuel 24:1-8), Nabal (1 Samuel 25:21-35), and Shimei (2 Samuel 16:5-12) and showed great kindness to Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 9). In asking God to destroy his enemies, David was simply asking him to give the wicked the punishment they deserved.

**18:43-45** David's great power had become legendary. God had given him victory in every battle. The book of 2 Samuel records victories over the Jebusites (5:6-10), the Philistines (5:17-25; 8:1), Hadadezer of Zobah (8:3, 4), the Syrians (8:5, 6, 10), the Edomites (8:13, 14), and the Ammonites (12:26-31). In addition, the king of Tyre had sent supplies and workmen to help David build his palace (5:11). But David did not attribute his victories to himself. He fully realized that the purpose of his position was to bless God's people (1 Chronicles 14:2).

<sup>48</sup>He delivereth me from mine enemies: yea, thou liftest me up above those that rise up against me: thou hast delivered me from the violent man.

<sup>49</sup>Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name.

<sup>50</sup>Great deliverance giveth he to his king; and sheweth mercy to his anointed, to David, and to his seed for evermore.

**Theme:** Both God's creation and his Word reveal his greatness.

**Author:** David

## 19 *To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David*

<sup>1</sup>The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork.

<sup>2</sup>Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

<sup>3</sup>There is no speech nor language, *where* their voice is not heard.

<sup>4</sup>Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,

<sup>5</sup>Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, *and* rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.

<sup>6</sup>His going forth *is* from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

<sup>7</sup>The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple.

<sup>8</sup>The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes.

<sup>9</sup>The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD *are* true *and* righteous altogether.

<sup>10</sup>More to be desired *are* they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

<sup>11</sup>Moreover by them is thy servant warned: *and* in keeping of them *there is* great reward.

<sup>12</sup>Who can understand *his* errors? cleanse thou me from secret *faults*.

<sup>13</sup>Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous *sins*; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

<sup>14</sup>Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

**19:1** *firmament:* skies. **19:4** *line:* voice. *tabernacle:* tent. **19:12** *secret:* hidden.

**18:48**  
Pss 3:7; 27:5-6

**18:49**  
Ps 108:1  
†Rom 15:9

**18:50**  
Pss 21:1; 28:8; 89:4

**19:1**  
Gen 1:6-8  
Rom 1:19-20

**19:2**  
Ps 74:16

**19:4**  
†Rom 10:18

**19:6**  
Ps 113:3

**19:7**  
Pss 23:3; 36:9;  
111:7; 119:14,  
98-100, 160

**19:8**  
Pss 12:6; 119:128

**19:9**  
Ps 119:138, 142

**19:10**  
Ps 119:127

**19:11**  
Ps 17:4  
Prov 29:18-19

**19:12**  
Pss 51:1-2; 90:8;  
139:23-24

**19:13**  
Pss 25:11; 32:2

**19:14**  
Pss 18:2; 104:34

**19:1ff** David's steps of meditation take him from creation, through God's Word, through his own sinfulness, to salvation. As God reveals himself through nature (19:1-6), we learn about his power and our finiteness. As God reveals himself through Scripture (19:7-11), we learn about his holiness and our sinfulness. As God reveals himself through daily experiences (19:12-14), we learn about his gracious forgiveness and our salvation.

**19:1-6** We are surrounded by fantastic displays of God's craftsmanship—the heavens give dramatic evidence of his existence, his power, his love, and his care. To say that the universe happened by chance is absurd. Its design, intricacy, and orderliness give proof of a personally involved Creator. As you look at God's craftsmanship in nature and the heavens, thank him for such magnificent beauty and the truth it reveals about the Creator.

**19:3, 4** The apostle Paul referred to this psalm when he explained that everyone knows about God because nature proclaims his existence and power (Romans 1:19, 20). This does not cancel the need for missions, because the message of God's salvation must still be told to the ends of the earth. While nature

points to the existence of God, the Bible tells us about salvation. God's people must explain to others how they can have a relationship with God. Although people everywhere should already believe in a Creator by just looking at the evidence of nature around them, they need to learn about God's love, mercy, and grace.

**19:7-11** When we think of statutes, commandments, and judgments, we often think of rules that keep us from having fun. But here we see the opposite—law that converts us, makes us wise, rejoices the heart, enlightens the eyes, warns us, and rewards us. That's because God's laws are guidelines and lights on our path, rather than chains on our hands and feet. They point at danger to warn us, and then point at success to guide us.

**19:12, 13** Guilt plagues many Christians. They worry that they may have committed a sin unknowingly, done something good with selfish intentions, failed to put their whole heart into a task, or neglected what they should have done. Guilt can play an important role in bringing us to Christ and in keeping us behaving properly, but it should not cripple us or make us fearful. God fully and completely forgives us—even for those sins we do unknowingly.

**19:14** Would you change the way you live if you knew that every word and thought would be examined by God first? David asks that God approve his words and reflections as though they were offerings brought to the altar. As you begin each day, determine that God's love will guide what you say and how you think.

**Theme:** A prayer for victory in battle. Such a prayer can help us prepare for any great challenge. David knew that trust should be placed in the Lord more than in human power.  
**Author:** David. The events in 2 Samuel 10 may have prompted this prayer.

**20:1**  
Ps 46:7, 11

**20:2**  
Pss 3:4; 110:2

**20:3**  
Ps 51:19  
Acts 10:4

**20:4**  
Pss 21:2; 145:19

**20:5**  
1 Sam 1:17  
Pss 9:14; 60:4

**20:6**  
Pss 28:8; 41:11  
Isa 58:9

**20:7**  
2 Chr 32:8  
Ps 33:16-17

**20:9**  
Ps 17:6

## 20 *To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David*

- 1 The LORD hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee;
- 2 Send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion;
- 3 Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice; Selah.
- 4 Grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel.
- 5 We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up *our* banners: the LORD fulfil all thy petitions.
- 6 Now know I that the LORD saveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand.
- 7 Some *trust* in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God.
- 8 They are brought down and fallen: but we are risen, and stand upright.
- 9 Save, LORD: let the king hear us when we call.

**Theme:** Praising God after victory in battle. When God answers our prayers for victory, we must quickly and openly thank him for his help.

**Author:** David

## 21 *To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David*

**21:1**  
Ps 59:16-17

**21:2**  
Ps 37:4

**21:4**  
Pss 61:6; 91:16;  
133:3

**21:5**  
Pss 8:5; 96:6

**21:7**  
Pss 112:6; 125:1

**21:8**  
Isa 10:10

**21:9**  
Lam 2:2  
Mal 4:1

- 1 The king shall joy in thy strength, O LORD; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!
- 2 Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips. Selah.
- 3 For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness: thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head.
- 4 He asked life of thee, *and* thou gavest *it* him, *even* length of days for ever and ever.
- 5 His glory *is* great in thy salvation: honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him.
- 6 For thou hast made him most blessed for ever: thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance.
- 7 For the king trusteth in the LORD, and through the mercy of the most High he shall not be moved.
- 8 Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies: thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee.
- 9 Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger: the LORD shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them.
- 10 Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men.

**20:4** *counsel: plans.* **20:5** *petitions: prayers.* **21:3** *preventest: meet.*

**20:2** Zion, the name of the hill on which Jerusalem was built, is also used as another name for the city itself, where David kept the Ark of the Covenant and Solomon built the great Temple for God. God himself chose Zion to represent his presence upon the earth (132:13).

**20:6-8** As long as there have been armies and weapons, nations have boasted of their power, but such power does not last. Throughout history, empires and kingdoms have risen to great power only to vanish in the dust. David, however, knew that the true might of his nation was not in weaponry but in worship; not in firepower but in God's power. Since God alone can preserve a nation or an individual, be sure your confidence is in God, who gives eternal victory. Whom do you trust?

**21:1-6** David described all that he had as gifts from God: his "heart's desire," prosperity, a golden crown, long life, honor and majesty, eternal blessings, gladness. We, too, should look upon all we have—position, family, wealth, talent—as gifts from God. Only then will we use them to give glory back to him.

**21:7** A good leader trusts God and depends upon his steadfast love. Too often leaders trust in their own cleverness, popular support, or the "god" of military power. But God is above all these gods. If you aspire to leadership, keep the Lord God at the center of your life and depend on him. His love will keep you from stumbling.

**21:7** Because David trusted in God, God would not let others remove him from the throne. When we trust in God, we have permanence and stability. We may lose a great deal—families, jobs, material possessions—but we cannot be moved out of God's favor. He will be our foundation of solid rock. He will never leave or desert us.



<sup>11</sup>For they intended evil against thee: they imagined a mischievous device, *which* they are not able to perform.

<sup>12</sup>Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back, *when* thou shalt make ready *thine arrows* upon thy strings against the face of them.

<sup>13</sup>Be thou exalted, LORD, in thine own strength: *so* will we sing and praise thy power.

21:11  
Ps 2:1-3

21:12  
Pss 7:12-13; 18:40

21:13  
Pss 59:16; 81:1

**Theme:** A prayer that carries us from great suffering to great joy. Despite apparent rejection by his friends and God, David believed that God would lead him out of despair. He looked forward to that future day when God would rule over the entire earth.

**Author:** David

## 22

*To the chief Musician upon Aijeleth Shahar, A Psalm of David*

<sup>1</sup>My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? *why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?*

<sup>2</sup>O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.

<sup>3</sup>But thou *art* holy, O *thou* that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

<sup>4</sup>Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.

<sup>5</sup>They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.

<sup>6</sup>But I *am* a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.

<sup>7</sup>All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, *saying*,

<sup>8</sup>He trusted on the LORD *that* he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.

<sup>9</sup>But thou *art* he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope *when I was* upon my mother's breasts.

<sup>10</sup>I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou *art* my God from my mother's belly.

<sup>11</sup>Be not far from me; for trouble *is* near; for *there is* none to help.

<sup>12</sup>Many bulls have compassed me: strong *bulls* of Bashan have beset me round.

<sup>13</sup>They gaped upon me *with* their mouths, *as* a ravening and a roaring lion.

<sup>14</sup>I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.

<sup>15</sup>My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.

<sup>16</sup>For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.

<sup>17</sup>I may tell all my bones: they look *and* stare upon me.

<sup>18</sup>They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.

<sup>19</sup>But be not thou far from me, O LORD: O my strength, haste thee to help me.

<sup>20</sup>Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog.

22:1  
<sup>1</sup>Matt 27:46  
<sup>1</sup>Mark 15:34

22:2  
Pss 42:3; 88:1

22:3  
Pss 99:9; 148:14

22:6  
Job 25:6  
Ps 31:11  
Isa 41:14; 49:7

22:7  
Isa 53:3  
Matt 27:39  
Mark 15:29-30

22:8  
Matt 27:43

22:9  
Ps 71:5-6

22:10  
Isa 46:3

22:13  
Ps 17:12

22:14  
Job 30:16  
Ps 31:9-10

22:15  
Pss 38:10; 104:29  
<sup>1</sup>John 19:28

22:16  
Ps 59:6-7  
Matt 27:35  
John 20:25

22:18  
<sup>1</sup>Matt 27:35  
<sup>1</sup>Mark 15:24  
Luke 23:34  
John 19:23-24

22:19  
Pss 22:11; 70:5

22:20  
Pss 35:17; 37:14

21:11 *imagined:* devised. *mischievous device:* wicked plot. 22:1 *roaring:* groaning. 22:3 *that inhabitest:* enthroned on. 22:5 *confounded:* disappointed. 22:10 *the womb:* birth. *belly:* womb. 22:12 *compassed:* surrounded. *beset me round:* encircled me. 22:14 *in the midst of my bowels:* within me. 22:15 *potsherd:* sunbaked clay. *cleaveth:* sticks. 22:17 *may tell:* can count. 22:18 *part:* divide. *vesture:* clothing. 22:20 *darling:* precious life.

**21:11** When you see evil schemes unfold, remember that they will not succeed forever. The power of evildoers is only temporary, and God's very presence would send them scattering in a moment. God, according to his plan and purpose, will intervene for his people and give the wicked the judgment they deserve. We should not be dismayed when we see the temporary advantage God's enemies have.

**22:1** David gave an amazingly accurate description of the suffering the Messiah would endure hundreds of years later. David was obviously enduring some great trial, but through his suffering, he, like the Messiah to come, gained victory. Jesus, the Messiah, quoted this verse while hanging on the cross carrying our burden of sin (Matthew 27:46). It was not a cry of doubt, but an urgent appeal to God.

**22:6** When others despise us and heap scorn upon us, they treat us as less than human. After much degradation, we, like David, could begin to feel like worms. When we feel the sting of rejection, we must keep in mind the hope and victory God promises us (22:22ff).

**22:9-11** God's loving concern does not begin on the day we are born and conclude on the day we die. It reaches back to those days before we were born, and reaches ahead along the unending path of eternity. Our only sure help comes from God whose concern for us reaches beyond our earthly existence. How can anyone reject such love?

**22:12** The land of Bashan, located east of the Sea of Galilee, was known for its strong and fat cattle (Amos 4:1). Because of its grain fields, it was often called the breadbasket of Palestine.

**22:18** It is a great insult to human dignity to rob a person of everything, even his clothing, leaving him naked and destitute. Jesus the Messiah would suffer this humiliating experience on the cross (Matthew 27:35). Most of us will never know the shame and suffering of being penniless and naked in a public place, as many of the Jews did during the Nazi holocaust. But most of us feel equally exposed and naked when some sin, secret or not-so-secret, is uncovered. At that time, we must cry out with the psalmist, "O my strength, haste thee to help me" (22:19).



- 22:21**  
Pss 34:4; 118:5; 120:1
- 22:22**  
<sup>1</sup>Heb 2:12
- 22:23**  
Pss 33:8; 86:12; 135:19-20
- 22:24**  
Pss 27:9; 31:22  
Heb 5:7
- 22:25**  
Pss 35:18; 40:9-10
- 22:26**  
Pss 40:16; 69:32; 107:9
- 22:28**  
Ps 47:6-8
- 22:30**  
Ps 102:18, 28
- 21** Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.
- 22** I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.
- 23** Ye that fear the LORD, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.
- 24** For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard.
- 25** My praise *shall be* of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him.
- 26** The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever.
- 27** All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.
- 28** For the kingdom is the LORD's: and he is the governor among the nations.
- 29** All *they that be* fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul.
- 30** A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the LORD for a generation.
- 22:21** unicorns: wild oxen. **22:30** a seed: posterity, accounted to the LORD for a: told of the LORD to the next.

### CHRIST IN THE PSALMS

Both the Jewish and Christian faiths have long believed that many psalms referred as much to the promised Messiah as they did to events at the time. Because the Messiah was to be a descendant of David, it was expected that many of the royal psalms would apply to him. Christians noted how many of the passages seemed to describe in detail events from Christ's life and death. Jesus himself frequently quoted from Psalms. Almost everything that happened at the crucifixion and most of Jesus' words during his final hours were prophesied in Psalms.

The following is a list of the main references in Psalms pertaining to Christ.

<i>Reference in Psalms</i>	<i>Reference to Christ</i>	<i>Fulfillment in the New Testament</i>
2:7	The Messiah will be God's Son	Hebrews 1:5, 6
16:8-10	He will rise from the dead	Luke 24:5-7
22:1-21	He will be crucified	Matthew 26-27
22:15	He will thirst while on the cross	John 19:28
22:18	Soldiers will gamble for his clothing	Matthew 27:35 John 19:23, 24
22:22	He will speak of his Father	Hebrews 2:12
34:20	His bones will not be broken	John 19:36, 37
40:6-8	He will come to do God's will	Hebrews 10:5-7
41:9	One close to him will betray him	Luke 22:48
45:6, 7	His Kingdom will last forever	Hebrews 1:8, 9
68:18	He will ascend into heaven	Ephesians 4:8-10
69:9	He will be zealous for God	John 2:17
69:21	He will be offered gall and vinegar for his thirst on the cross	Matthew 27:48
89:3, 4, 35, 36	He will be a descendant of David	Luke 1:31-33
96:13	He will return to judge the world	1 Thessalonians 1:10
110:1	He is David's son and David's Lord	Matthew 22:44
110:4	He is the eternal Priest-King	Hebrews 6:20
118:22	He is rejected by many but accepted by God	1 Peter 2:7, 8

**22:22** David would praise God among the people because his private deliverance deserved a public testimony. God may wonderfully deliver us in the quiet moments when we are hurting, and we must be prepared to offer public praise for his care.

**22:30, 31** Unborn generations are depending on our faithfulness today. As we teach our children about the Lord, so they will teach their children and their children's children. If we fail to tell our children about the Lord, we may well be breaking the chain of God's

influence in generations to come. We must view our children and all the young people we meet as God's future leaders. If we are faithful in opportunities today, we may well be affecting the future.

**22:30, 31** If we want our children to serve the Lord, they must hear about him from us. It is not enough to rely on the church or those with more knowledge to provide all their Christian education. We must reinforce the lessons of the Bible in our homes.

<sup>31</sup>They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done *this*.

**Theme:** God is seen as a caring shepherd and a dependable guide. We must follow God and obey his commands. He is our only hope for eternal life and security.

**Author:** David

## 23 *A Psalm of David*

<sup>1</sup>The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

<sup>2</sup>He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

<sup>3</sup>He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

<sup>4</sup>Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

<sup>5</sup>Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

<sup>6</sup>Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

**Theme:** Everything belongs to God—the glorious eternal King. Let us worship him and welcome his glorious reign.

**Author:** David

## 24 *A Psalm of David*

<sup>1</sup>The earth is the LORD's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

<sup>2</sup>For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.

<sup>3</sup>Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?

<sup>4</sup>He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

<sup>5</sup>He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

<sup>6</sup>This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah.

**24:4** *unto vanity:* to an idol.

**23:1**  
John 10:11  
1 Pet 2:25

**23:2**  
Pss 5:8; 46:4  
Ezek 34:14  
Rev 7:17

**23:3**  
Pss 5:8; 19:7; 85:13

**23:4**  
Pss 27:1; 107:14

**23:5**  
Pss 16:5; 78:19;  
92:10

**23:6**  
Pss 25:6-7; 10;  
27:4-6

**24:1**  
Ps 89:11  
1 Cor 10:26

**24:3**  
Pss 15:1; 65:4

**24:4**  
Job 17:9  
Pss 51:10; 73:1  
Matt 5:8

**24:5**  
Deut 11:26-27

**24:6**  
Ps 27:8

**23:1** In describing the Lord as a shepherd, David wrote out of his own experience, because he had spent his early years caring for sheep (1 Samuel 16:10, 11). Sheep are completely dependent on the shepherd for provision, guidance, and protection. The New Testament calls Jesus the Good Shepherd (John 10:11), the Great Shepherd (Hebrews 13:20, 21), and the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4). As the Lord is the Good Shepherd, so we are his sheep—not dumb, frightened, passive animals, but obedient followers wise enough to follow one who will lead us in the right places and in right ways. This psalm does not focus on the animal-like qualities of sheep, but on the discipleship qualities of those who follow. When you recognize the Good Shepherd, follow him!

**23:2, 3** When we allow God, our shepherd, to guide us, we have contentment. When we choose to sin, however, we go our own way and cannot blame God for the environment we create for ourselves. Our shepherd knows the “green pastures” and “still waters” that will restore us. We will reach these places only by following him obediently. Rebelling against the shepherd's leading is actually rebelling against our own best interests. We must remember this the next time we are tempted to go our own way rather than the shepherd's way.

**23:4** Death casts a frightening shadow over us because we are entirely helpless in its presence. We can struggle with other enemies—pain, suffering, disease, injury—but strength and courage cannot overcome death. It has the final word. Only one person can walk with us through death's dark valley and bring us safely to the other side—the God of life, our shepherd. Because

life is uncertain, we should follow this shepherd who offers us eternal comfort.

**23:5, 6** In Middle Eastern culture, at a feast it was customary to anoint a person with fragrant oil. Hosts were expected to protect their guests at all costs. God offers the protection of a host even when enemies surround us. In the final scene of this psalm, we see that believers will dwell with the Lord. God, the perfect shepherd and host, promises to guide and protect us throughout our life and to bring us into his home forever.

**24:1ff** This psalm could have been written to celebrate the moving of the Ark of the Covenant from Obed-edom's house to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6:10–12). Tradition says that this psalm was sung on the first day of each week in the Temple services. Verses 1–6 tell who is worthy to join in such a celebration of worship.

**24:1** Because “the earth is the LORD's,” all of us are stewards, or caretakers. We should be committed to the proper management of this world and its resources. We are not to become devoted to anything created or act as sole proprietors, however, because this world will pass away (1 John 2:17).

**24:4** *Vanity*, in this case, refers to falsehood, and swearing deceitfully means telling lies under oath. How greatly God values honesty! Dishonesty comes easily, especially when complete truthfulness could cost us something, make us uncomfortable, or put us in an unfavorable light. Dishonest communication hinders relationships. Without honesty, a relationship with God is impossible. If we lie to others, we begin to deceive ourselves. God cannot hear us or speak to us if we are building a wall of self-deception.

24:8  
Exod 15:3, 6  
Ps 76:3-6

<sup>7</sup>Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

24:9  
Zech 9:9  
Matt 21:5

<sup>8</sup>Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.

<sup>9</sup>Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift *them* up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

<sup>10</sup>Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah.

**Theme:** A prayer for defense, guidance, and pardon. As we trust in God, he grants these same requests for us.

**Author:** David

## 25 A Psalm of David

<sup>1</sup>Unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul.

<sup>2</sup>O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.

<sup>3</sup>Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.

<sup>4</sup>Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths.

<sup>5</sup>Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou *art* the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.

<sup>6</sup>Remember, O LORD, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses; for they *have been* ever of old.

<sup>7</sup>Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O LORD.

<sup>8</sup>Good and upright *is* the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.

<sup>9</sup>The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.

**25:3** *transgress:* deal treacherously. **25:9** *meek:* humble. *judgment:* justice.

25:3  
Pss 37:9; 40:1  
Isa 49:23

25:4  
Pss 5:8; 86:11

25:5  
Pss 24:5; 40:1

25:6  
Ps 103:17

25:7  
Job 13:26  
Ps 51:1

25:8  
Ps 86:5

25:9  
Pss 23:3; 32:8

### PSALMS TO LEARN AND LOVE

Almost everybody, whether religious or not, has heard Psalm 23 because it is quoted so frequently. Many other psalms are also familiar because they are quoted in music, in literature, or in the words of the worship service.

The psalms we know and love are the ones that come into our minds when we need them. They inspire us, comfort us, or correct us just when we need a word from the Lord. If you want to begin memorizing psalms, start with some of these favorites. Memorize the whole psalm or just the verses that speak most directly to you. Or read the psalm aloud several times a day until it is part of you.

Psalms to bring us into God's presence . . . . . 29, 95:1-7a; 96; 100

Psalms about goodness . . . . . 1; 19; 24; 133; 136; 139

Psalms of praise . . . . . 8; 97; 103; 107; 113; 145; 150

Psalms of repentance and forgiveness . . . . . 32:1-5; 51; 103

Psalms for times of trouble . . . . . 3; 14; 22; 37:1-11; 42; 46; 53; 116:1-7

Psalms of confidence and trust . . . . . 23; 40:1-4; 91; 119:11; 121; 127

**24:7-10** This psalm, often set to music, was probably used in corporate worship. It may have been reenacted many times at the Temple. The people outside would call out to the Temple gates to open up and let the King of glory in. From inside, the priests or another group would ask, "Who is this King of glory?" Outside, the people would respond in unison, "The LORD mighty in battle," proclaiming his great power and strength. The exchange would then be repeated (24:9, 10), and the Temple gates swung open, symbolizing the people's desire to have God's presence among them. This would have been an important lesson for children who were participating.

**24:7-10** Who is the King of glory? The King of glory, identified also as the Lord of hosts, or the commander of heaven's armies, is the Messiah himself, eternal, holy, and mighty (Revelation 19:11-21). This psalm is not only a battle cry for the church, it also looks forward to Christ's future entry into the new Jerusalem to reign forever.

**25:2** Seventy-two psalms—almost half the book—speak about

enemies. Enemies are those who oppose not only us, but also God's way of living. We can view temptations—money, success, prestige, lust—as our enemies. And our greatest enemy is Satan. David asked God to keep his enemies from overcoming him because they opposed what God stood for. If his enemies succeeded, David feared that many would think that living for God was futile. David did not question his own faith—he knew that God would triumph. But he didn't want his enemies' success to be an obstacle to the faith of others.

**25:4** David expressed his desire for guidance. How do we receive God's guidance? The first step is to *want* to be guided and to realize that God's primary guidance system is in his Word, the Bible. Psalm 119 tells of the endless knowledge found in God's Word. By reading the Bible and constantly learning from it, we will gain the wisdom to perceive God's direction for our lives. While we may be tempted to demand answers from God, David asked for direction. When we are willing to seek God, learn from his Word, and obey his commands, then we will receive his guidance.

<sup>10</sup>All the paths of the LORD *are* mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.

<sup>11</sup>For thy name's sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.

<sup>12</sup>What man *is* he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way *that* he shall choose.

<sup>13</sup>His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth.

<sup>14</sup>The secret of the LORD *is* with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.

<sup>15</sup>Mine eyes *are* ever toward the LORD; for he shall pluck my feet out of the net.

<sup>16</sup>Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I *am* desolate and afflicted.

<sup>17</sup>The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my distresses.

<sup>18</sup>Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins.

<sup>19</sup>Consider mine enemies; for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred.

<sup>20</sup>O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee.

<sup>21</sup>Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee.

<sup>22</sup>Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.

**25:10**  
Pss 40:11;  
103:17-18

**25:11**  
Ps 79:9

**25:13**  
Pss 37:11; 69:36

**25:14**  
Prov 3:32  
John 7:17

**25:15**  
Pss 31:4; 123:2;  
141:8

**25:16**  
Ps 69:16

**25:17**  
Pss 40:12; 107:6

**25:18**  
Pss 31:7; 103:3

**25:19**  
Pss 3:1; 9:13

**25:20**  
Pss 25:2; 86:2

**25:21**  
Pss 25:3; 41:12

**26:1**  
Pss 7:8; 13:5  
Heb 10:23

**26:2**  
Pss 7:9; 139:23

**26:3**  
Pss 1:2; 48:9

**26:4**  
Ps 1:1

**26:5**  
Pss 1:1; 31:6;  
139:21

**26:6**  
Ps 43:3-4

**26:7**  
Ps 9:1

**26:8**  
Ps 27:4

**26:9**  
Ps 28:3

**26:11**  
Pss 26:1; 69:18

**26:12**  
Pss 22:22; 27:11;  
40:2

**Theme:** Declaring loyalty to God. If we are genuinely committed to God, we can stand up to opposition and examination.

**Author:** David, possibly written during the days of Absalom's rebellion

## 26 A Psalm of David

<sup>1</sup>Judge me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the LORD; *therefore* I shall not slide.

<sup>2</sup>Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.

<sup>3</sup>For thy lovingkindness *is* before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth.

<sup>4</sup>I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers.

<sup>5</sup>I have hated the congregation of evildoers; and will not sit with the wicked.

<sup>6</sup>I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O LORD:

<sup>7</sup>That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works.

<sup>8</sup>LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.

<sup>9</sup>Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men:

<sup>10</sup>In whose hands *is* mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes.

<sup>11</sup>But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity: redeem me, and be merciful unto me.

<sup>12</sup>My foot standeth in an even place: in the congregations will I bless the LORD.

**25:14** *secret:* friendship. **26:2** *try my reins:* test my mind. **26:4** *vain:* deceitful, *dissemblers:* hypocrites. **26:6** *compass:* come before. **26:7** *publish:* proclaim. **26:8** *the habitation of thy house:* the house where you live. **26:10** *mischief:* a wicked scheme.

**25:12** To fear the Lord is to recognize him for who he is: holy, almighty, righteous, pure, all-knowing, all-powerful, and all-wise. When we see God in this light, we also see ourselves for who we are: sinful, weak, frail, and needy. When we recognize God for who he is and ourselves for who we are, we will fall at his feet in humble respect. Only there can he teach us how to choose his way.

**25:14** God offers intimate and lasting friendship to those who revere him, who hold him in highest honor. What relationship could ever compare with having the Lord of all creation for a friend? Your everlasting friendship with God will grow as you respect and honor him.

**25:16, 17** Do life's problems always seem to go from bad to worse? God is the only one who can reverse this downward spiral. He can take our problems and turn them into glorious victories. The first and most important step is that we, like the psalmist, must cry out, "Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me." When we are willing to do that, God will do his work in us and in our situation. The next step is yours, for God has already made his offer.

**25:21** We need integrity and uprightness to preserve us along life's way. The psalm writer asks for these to protect him step-by-step. Uprightness says, "This is the Shepherd's way," and integrity says, "I will walk consistently in it."

**26:1-3** David was not claiming to be sinless—that is impossible for any human being to achieve. Instead, he was pleading with God to clear his name of the false charges made against him by his enemies. We also can ask God to examine us, trusting him to forgive our sins and clear our record according to his mercy.

**26:4, 5** Should we stay away from unbelievers? No. Although Christians should avoid some places, Jesus demonstrated that we must go among unbelievers to help them. There is a difference, however, between being *with* unbelievers and being *one of* them. Acting like unbelievers harms our witness for God. Ask yourself about the people you enjoy: If you are with them often, will you become less obedient to God in outlook or action? If the answer is yes, carefully monitor how you spend your time with these people and their effect on you.

**26:8** God's house in this verse refers to either the Tabernacle in Gibeon (the one constructed in the days of Moses; see Exodus 40:35) or the temporary dwelling David built to house the Ark of the Covenant (2 Samuel 6:17). David exclaimed how he loved to worship God at this place. Do you love to worship?

**26:12** Too often we complain about our problems to anyone who will listen and we praise God only in private. Instead, we ought to complain privately and praise God publicly.

**Theme:** God offers help for today and hope for the future. Unwavering confidence in God is our antidote for fear and loneliness.

**Author:** David

## 27 *A Psalm of David*

**27:1**  
Pss 18:28;  
118:6, 14

<sup>1</sup>The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

**27:3**  
Pss 3:6-7; 14:4

<sup>2</sup>When the wicked, *even* mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.

**27:4**  
Pss 23:6; 26:8

<sup>3</sup>Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this *will I be* confident.

**27:5**  
Pss 17:8; 31:20

<sup>4</sup>*One thing* have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple.

**27:6**  
Pss 13:6; 107:22

<sup>5</sup>For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.

**27:7**  
Ps 13:3

<sup>6</sup>And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD.

**27:8**  
Ps 105:4

<sup>7</sup>Hear, O LORD, *when* I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me.

**27:9**  
Pss 6:1; 40:17;  
69:17; 94:14

<sup>8</sup>*When thou saidst*, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.

**27:10**  
Isa 40:11; 49:15

<sup>9</sup>Hide not thy face *far* from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.

**27:11**  
Pss 5:8; 25:4; 86:11

<sup>10</sup>When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up.

**27:12**  
Ps 35:11  
Matt 26:60  
Acts 9:1

<sup>11</sup>Teach me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.

<sup>12</sup>Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.

**27:13**  
Pss 116:9; 142:5  
Isa 38:11

<sup>13</sup>*I had fainted*, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.

**27:14**  
Pss 31:24; 37:34

<sup>14</sup>Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

**27:5** *pavilion:* dwelling. *secret:* shelter. **27:11** *plain:* level.

**27:1** Fear is a dark shadow that envelops us and ultimately imprisons us within ourselves. Everyone has been a prisoner of fear at one time or another—fear of rejection, misunderstanding, uncertainty, sickness, or even death. But we can conquer fear by trusting in the Lord, who brings salvation. If we want to dispel the darkness of fear, let us remember with the psalm writer that “the LORD is my light and my salvation.”

**27:4** By the “house of the LORD” and “his temple,” David could be referring to the Tabernacle in Gibeon, to the sanctuary he had built to house the Ark of the Covenant, or to the Temple that his son Solomon was to build. David probably had the Temple in mind because he made many of the plans for it (1 Chronicles 22). David may also have used the word *temple* to refer to the presence of the Lord. David’s greatest desire was to live in God’s presence each day of his life. Sadly, this is not the greatest desire of many who claim to be believers. What do you most desire? Do you look forward to being in the presence of the Lord?

**27:7** We often run to God when we experience difficulties. But David sought God’s guiding presence *every day*. When troubles came his way, he was *already* in God’s presence and prepared to handle any test. Believers can call to God for help at any time, but how shortsighted to call on God only when troubles come. Many of our problems could be avoided or handled far more easily by seeking God’s help and direction beforehand.

**27:10** Many have had the sad experience of being forsaken by father or mother. Broken homes, differences of belief, addiction to drugs or alcohol, even psychological isolation can leave chil-

dren crippled by this loss. Even as adults, the pain may linger. God can take that place in our life, fill that void, and heal that hurt. He can direct us to those who may take the role of father or mother for us. His love is sufficient for all our needs.

**27:13** The “land of the living” simply means “this life” or “while I am living.” David was obviously going through a trial, but he was confident that in this present life God would see him through it.

**27:14** David knew from experience what it meant to wait on the Lord. He had been anointed king at age 16, but didn’t become king until he was 30. During the interim, he had been chased through the wilderness by jealous King Saul. David had to wait on God for the fulfillment of his promise to reign. Later, after becoming king, he was chased by his rebellious son, Absalom.

Waiting on God is not easy. Often it seems that he isn’t answering our prayers or doesn’t understand the urgency of our situation. That kind of thinking implies that God is not in control or is not fair. But God is worth waiting for. Isaiah 40:27–31 calls us to wait because often God uses times of waiting to refresh, renew, and teach us. Make good use of your waiting times by discovering what God may be trying to teach you in them.

**Theme:** Prayer when surrounded by trouble or wickedness. God is our only real source of safety. Prayer is our best help when trials come our way because it keeps us in communion with God.

**Author:** David

## 28 *A Psalm of David*

<sup>1</sup> Unto thee will I cry, O LORD my rock; be not silent to me: lest, *if* thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit.

<sup>2</sup> Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle.

<sup>3</sup> Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief *is* in their hearts.

<sup>4</sup> Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours: give them after the work of their hands; render to them their desert.

<sup>5</sup> Because they regard not the works of the LORD, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up.

<sup>6</sup> Blessed *be* the LORD, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications.

<sup>7</sup> The LORD *is* my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him.

<sup>8</sup> The LORD *is* their strength, and he *is* the saving strength of his anointed.

<sup>9</sup> Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.

**28:1**

Ps 18:2; 35:22;  
83:1; 88:4-5

**28:2**

Ps 141:2  
Lam 2:19  
1 Tim 2:8

**28:3**

Ps 26:9-10; 55:21;  
62:4  
Jer 9:8

**28:4**

Ps 62:12  
2 Tim 4:14  
Rev 18:6

**28:5**

Isa 5:12

**28:6**

Ps 116:1

**28:7**

Ps 13:5-6; 16:9;  
40:3; 59:17

**28:8**

Ps 20:6

**28:9**

Deut 9:29; 32:9  
Ps 33:12; 80:1  
Isa 40:11

**Theme:** God reveals his great power in nature. We can trust God to give us both the peace and strength to weather the storms of life.

**Author:** David

## 29 *A Psalm of David*

<sup>1</sup> Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength.

<sup>2</sup> Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

<sup>3</sup> The voice of the LORD *is* upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the LORD *is* upon many waters.

<sup>4</sup> The voice of the LORD *is* powerful; the voice of the LORD *is* full of majesty.

<sup>5</sup> The voice of the LORD breaketh the cedars; yea, the LORD breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.

<sup>6</sup> He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.

<sup>7</sup> The voice of the LORD divideth the flames of fire.

<sup>8</sup> The voice of the LORD shaketh the wilderness; the LORD shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.

<sup>9</sup> The voice of the LORD maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in his temple doth every one speak of *his* glory.

<sup>10</sup> The LORD sitteth upon the flood; yea, the LORD sitteth King for ever.

<sup>11</sup> The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace.

**28:2** *oracle:* sanctuary. **28:3** *mischief:* evil. **28:4** *render:* repay. *their desert:* what they deserve. **28:6** *supplications:* pleadings. **29:6** *unicorn:* wild ox. **29:9** *hinds to calve:* deer give birth. *discovereth:* strips bare.

**29:1**

1 Chr 16:28-29  
Ps 96:7-9

**29:4**

Ps 68:33

**29:5**

Isa 2:13

**29:6**

Deut 3:9  
Ps 114:4

**29:8**

Num 13:26

**29:9**

Ps 26:8

**29:10**

Gen 6:17  
Ps 10:16

**29:11**

Ps 28:8; 37:11;  
68:35  
Isa 40:29

**28:3-5** It's easy to pretend friendship. Wicked people often put on a show of kindness or friendship in order to gain their own ends. David, in his royal position, may have met many who pretended friendship only to meet their own needs. David knew that God would punish these people eventually, but he prayed that their punishment would come swiftly. True believers should be straightforward and sincere in all their relationships.

**29:5, 6** The cedars of Lebanon were giant trees that could grow to 120 feet tall and 30 feet in circumference. A voice that could split the cedars of Lebanon would be a truly powerful voice—the voice of God.

**29:10, 11** Throughout history, God has revealed his power through mighty miracles over nature, such as the great flood (Genesis 6—9). He promises to continue to reveal his power. Paul urged us to understand how great God's power is (Ephesians 1:18—23). The same power that raised Christ from the dead is available to help us with our daily problems. When you feel weak and limited, don't despair. Remember that God can give you strength. The power that controls creation and raises the dead is available to you.



**Theme:** A celebration of God's deliverance. Earthly security is uncertain, but God is always faithful.

**Author:** David

## 30 *A Psalm and Song at the dedication of the house of David*

<sup>1</sup>I will extol thee, O LORD; for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.

<sup>2</sup>O LORD my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.

<sup>3</sup>O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.

<sup>4</sup>Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

<sup>5</sup>For his anger *endureth* but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy *cometh* in the morning.

<sup>6</sup>And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.

<sup>7</sup>LORD, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, *and* I was troubled.

<sup>8</sup>I cried to thee, O LORD; and unto the LORD I made supplication.

<sup>9</sup>What profit is *there* in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth?

<sup>10</sup>Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me: LORD, be thou my helper.

<sup>11</sup>Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness;

<sup>12</sup>To the end that *my* glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.

**Theme:** In times of stress, depending upon God requires complete commitment.

**Author:** David, although some say Jeremiah

## 31 *To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David*

<sup>1</sup>In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness.

<sup>2</sup>Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me.

<sup>3</sup>For thou *art* my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me.

<sup>4</sup>Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for thou *art* my strength.

<sup>5</sup>Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.

<sup>6</sup>I have hated them that regard lying vanities: but I trust in the LORD.

**30:1** extol: exalt. **30:8** made supplication: pled for mercy. **30:11** girded: clothed. **31:4** privily: secretly. **31:6** lying vanities: worthless idols.

**30:1**  
Pss 25:2; 35:19, 24;  
118:28; 145:1

**30:2**  
Pss 6:2; 88:13

**30:3**  
Pss 28:1; 86:13

**30:4**  
Pss 97:12; 149:1

**30:5**  
Pss 103:9; 118:1

**30:6**  
Ps 10:6

**30:7**  
Ps 104:29

**30:9**  
Ps 6:5

**30:10**  
Pss 4:1; 27:7, 9

**30:11**  
Jer 31:4, 13

**30:12**  
Pss 44:8; 57:8;  
108:1

**31:1-4**  
//Ps 71:1-3

**31:1**  
Pss 25:2; 143:1

**31:2**  
Pss 71:3; 86:1;  
102:2

**31:3**  
Pss 18:2; 23:2-3

**31:4**  
Ps 25:15

**31:5**  
Luke 23:46  
Acts 7:59

**31:6**  
Jon 2:8-9

**30:1ff** David may have written this psalm when he dedicated Araunah's threshing floor and after God stopped the great plague he had used to discipline David (2 Samuel 24:10–25). The serious illness mentioned in 30:2, 3 may refer to an illness David experienced or to the plague itself.

**30:5** Like a shot given by a doctor, the discomfort of God's anger is momentary, but the good effects go on for a long time. Let God's anger be a brief discomfort that helps you repent and turn from sin.

**30:6, 7** Prosperity had made David feel invincible. Although he knew his riches and power had come from God, they had gone to his head, making him proud. Wealth, power, and fame can be intoxicating, making us feel self-reliant, self-secure, and independent of God. But this false security can be easily shattered. Don't be trapped by the false security of prosperity. Depend on God for your security and you won't be shaken when worldly possessions disappear.

**31:1** David called on the Lord to deliver him. He wanted God to stop those who were unjustly causing trouble. Therefore, David made his request based upon what he knew of God's name, or character. Because God is righteous and loving, he desires to deliver his people.

**31:1–6** We say we have faith in God, but do we really trust him? David's words, "Into thine hand I commit my spirit," convey his complete trust in God. Jesus used this phrase as he was dying on the cross—showing his absolute dependence on God the Father (Luke 23:46). Stephen repeated these words as he was being stoned to death (Acts 7:59), confident that in death he was simply passing from God's earthly care to God's eternal care. We should commit our possessions, our families, and our vocations to God. But first and foremost, we should commit *ourselves* completely to him.

**31:6** The "lying vanities" were false gods, or idols. Why did David suddenly bring up the subject of idol worship? He wanted to contrast his total devotion to God with the diluted worship offered by many Israelites. Heathen religious rituals were never completely banished from Israel and Judah, despite the efforts of David and a few other kings. Obviously a person who bowed to idols could not put his spirit in God's hands. When we put today's idols (wealth, material possessions, success) first in our lives, we cannot expect God's Spirit to guide us.

<sup>7</sup>I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities;

<sup>8</sup>And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy: thou hast set my feet in a large room.

<sup>9</sup>Have mercy upon me, O LORD, for I am in trouble: mine eye is consumed with grief, *yea*, my soul and my belly.

<sup>10</sup>For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed.

<sup>11</sup>I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without fled from me.

<sup>12</sup>I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel.

<sup>13</sup>For I have heard the slander of many: fear *was* on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life.

<sup>14</sup>But I trusted in thee, O LORD: I said, Thou *art* my God.

<sup>15</sup>My times *are* in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.

<sup>16</sup>Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: save me for thy mercies' sake.

<sup>17</sup>Let me not be ashamed, O LORD; for I have called upon thee: let the wicked be ashamed, *and* let them be silent in the grave.

<sup>18</sup>Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.

<sup>19</sup>*Oh* how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; *which* thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!

<sup>20</sup>Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.

<sup>21</sup>Blessed *be* the LORD: for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city.

<sup>22</sup>For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.

<sup>23</sup>O love the LORD, all ye his saints: *for* the LORD preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.

<sup>24</sup>Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD.

**31:7**  
Pss 10:14; 90:14

**31:8**  
Deut 32:30

**31:9**  
Pss 6:7; 32:3;  
38:3-4; 39:11; 63:1;  
69:17; 102:1, 3-4

**31:10**  
Ps 13:2

**31:11**  
Pss 38:11; 88:8, 18  
Isa 53:3

**31:12**  
Ps 88:5

**31:13**  
Ps 41:7  
Jer 20:10  
Matt 27:1

**31:14**  
Pss 140:6; 143:9

**31:15**  
Ps 143:9

**31:16**  
Num 6:24-26  
Ps 6:4

**31:17**  
1 Sam 2:9  
Ps 25:2-3, 20

**31:18**  
1 Sam 2:3  
Pss 94:4; 120:2

**31:19**  
Ps 5:11  
Rom 11:22

**31:20**  
Job 5:21  
Pss 27:5; 31:13

**31:21**  
Ps 17:7

**31:22**  
Pss 66:19;  
116:11-12; 145:19  
Lam 3:54-56

**Theme:** Forgiveness brings true joy. Only when we ask God to forgive our sins will he give us real happiness and relief from guilt.

**Author:** David

## 32 A Psalm of David, Maschil

<sup>1</sup>Blessed is *he* whose transgression is forgiven, *whose* sin is covered.

<sup>2</sup>Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit *there* is no guile.

<sup>3</sup>When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.

<sup>4</sup>For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.

**32:2**  
Ps 85:2  
<sup>1</sup>Rom 4:7-8

**32:3**  
Pss 31:10; 39:2

**32:4**  
Pss 22:15; 39:10

**31:8** *large room:* spacious place. **31:9** *belly:* body. **31:19** *wrought:* prepared. **31:20** *secret:* shelter. *pavilion:* dwelling. **31:23** *plentifully rewardeth:* fully repays. **32:2** *imputeth not:* does not count. *guile:* deceit. **32:3** *waxed:* grew. *roaring:* groaning.

**31:9-13** David describes the helplessness and hopelessness we feel when we are hated or rejected. But adversity is easier to accept when we recognize our true relationship with the sovereign God (31:14-18). Although our enemies may seem to have the upper hand, they are ultimately the helpless and hopeless ones. Those who know God will be victorious in the end (31:23). We can have courage today because God will preserve us.

**31:14, 15** In saying, "My times are in thy hand," David was expressing his belief that all of life's circumstances are under God's control. Knowing that God loves us and cares for us enables us to keep steady in our faith no matter what our circumstances may be.

**32:1** *Maschil* (see title) is a term denoting psalms written to make one wise or prudent, to increase a person's success or skill.

**32:1ff** Read this psalm in conjunction with Psalm 51—both are penitential psalms. Here David expressed the joy of forgiveness. God had forgiven him for the sins he had committed against Bath-sheba and Uriah (2 Samuel 11-12). This is another of the penitential (repentance) psalms where the writer confesses his sin to God.

**32:1, 2** God *wants* to forgive sinners. Forgiveness has always been part of his loving nature. He announced this to Moses (Exodus 34:6, 7); he revealed it to David; he dramatically showed it to the world through Jesus Christ. These verses convey several aspects of God's forgiveness: He forgives disobedience, covers sin, and clears our record of guilt. Paul quoted these verses in Romans 4:7, 8 and showed that we can have this joyous experience of forgiveness through faith in Christ.

**32:5**  
Lev 26:40  
Job 31:33  
Ps 38:18  
1 Jn 1:9

**32:6**  
Ps 69:13  
Isa 43:2

**32:7**  
Exod 15:1  
Pss 31:20; 40:3;  
121:7

**32:8**  
Pss 25:8; 33:18-19

**32:10**  
Ps 16:4  
Prov 16:20  
Rom 2:9-10

<sup>5</sup>I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

<sup>6</sup>For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.

<sup>7</sup>Thou *art* my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.

<sup>8</sup>I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.

<sup>9</sup>Be ye not as the horse, *or* as the mule, *which* have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.

<sup>10</sup>Many sorrows *shall be* to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about.

<sup>11</sup>Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all *ye that are* upright in heart.

**Theme:** Because God is Creator, Lord, Savior, and Deliverer, he is worthy of our trust and praise. Because he is faithful and his Word is dependable, we can rejoice and sing, giving thanks and praise.

**Author:** Anonymous

**33:1**  
Pss 32:11; 147:1

**33:2**  
Ps 92:3

**33:3**  
Pss 96:1; 98:1  
Rev 5:9

**33:4**  
Ps 19:8

**33:5**  
Pss 11:7; 119:64

**33:6**  
Gen 1:6-7  
Ps 148:5  
Heb 11:3

**33:7**  
Exod 15:8

**33:8**  
Pss 67:7; 96:9

**33** <sup>1</sup>Rejoice in the LORD, O ye righteous: *for* praise is comely for the upright.

<sup>2</sup>Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery *and* an instrument of ten strings.

<sup>3</sup>Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise.

<sup>4</sup>For the word of the LORD *is* right; and all his works *are done* in truth.

<sup>5</sup>He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.

<sup>6</sup>By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.

<sup>7</sup>He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses.

<sup>8</sup>Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.

**33:7** *compass: surround.* **33:1** *comely: fitting.* **33:5** *judgment: justice.*

## CONFESSION, REPENTANCE, AND FORGIVENESS IN THE PSALMS

Over the centuries, many believers, overcome by an awareness of their own sins, have found in the words of the penitential (confession) psalms a ray of hope. The psalm writers shared with God both the depth of their sorrow and repentance, as well as the height of their joy at being forgiven. They rejoiced in the knowledge that God would respond to confession and repentance with complete forgiveness. We, who live on the other side of the cross of Christ, can rejoice even more because we understand more. God has shown us that he is willing to forgive because his judgment on sin was satisfied by Christ's death on the cross.

As you read these psalms, note the pattern followed by the psalm writers in responding to God: (1) They recognized their sinfulness and tendency to do wrong; (2) they realized that sin was rebellion against God himself; (3) they admitted their sins to God; (4) they trusted in God's willingness to forgive; and (5) they accepted his forgiveness. Use these psalms as a reminder of how easy it is to drift away from God and fall into sin, and what is needed to reestablish that fellowship.

Selected psalms that emphasize these themes are 6, 14, 31, 32, 38, 41, 51, 102, 130, and 143.

**32:5** What is confession? To confess our sin is to agree with God, to acknowledge that he is right to declare what we have done a sin, and that we are wrong to desire or to do it. It means affirming our intention of abandoning that sin in order to follow God more faithfully.

**32:8, 9** God describes some people as being like horses or mules, controlled by bits and bridles. Rather than letting God guide them step by step, they stubbornly leave God only one option. If he wants to keep them useful for him, he must use discipline and punishment. God longs to guide us with love and wisdom rather than punishment. He offers to guide us along the *best* pathway for our lives. Accept the advice written in God's Word and don't let stubbornness get in the way.

**33:2, 3** David, who some believe wrote this psalm, was an accomplished harpist (1 Samuel 16:15-23). His psalms frequently refer to musical instruments. He undoubtedly composed music for many of the psalms, and he commissioned musicians for Temple worship (1 Chronicles 25).

**33:4** All God's words are true and trustworthy. The Bible is reliable because, unlike people, God does not lie, change his words, or leave his promises unfulfilled. We can trust the Bible because it contains the words of a holy, trustworthy, and unchangeable God.

**33:6-9** This is a poetic summary of the first chapter of Genesis. God is not just the coordinator of natural forces; he is the Lord of creation, the Almighty God. Because he is all-powerful, we should reverence him in all we do.

- <sup>9</sup>For he spake, and it was *done*; he commanded, and it stood fast.
- <sup>10</sup>The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect.
- <sup>11</sup>The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.
- <sup>12</sup>Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; *and* the people *whom* he hath chosen for his own inheritance.
- <sup>13</sup>The LORD looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men.
- <sup>14</sup>From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth.
- <sup>15</sup>He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works.
- <sup>16</sup>There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength.
- <sup>17</sup>An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver *any* by his great strength.
- <sup>18</sup>Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy;
- <sup>19</sup>To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.
- <sup>20</sup>Our soul waiteth for the LORD: he is our help and our shield.
- <sup>21</sup>For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name.
- <sup>22</sup>Let thy mercy, O LORD, be upon us, according as we hope in thee.

**33:9**  
Gen 1:3  
Ps 148:5

**33:10**  
Isa 8:9-10; 19:3

**33:12**  
Exod 19:5  
Ps 144:15

**33:16**  
Pss 44:6; 147:10

**33:17**  
Ps 20:7  
Prov 21:31

**33:18**  
Ps 34:15

**33:19**  
Ps 37:19

**33:20**  
Ps 115:9  
Isa 8:17

**Theme:** God pays attention to those who call on him. Whether God offers escape from trouble or help in times of trouble, we can be certain that he always hears and acts on behalf of those who love him.

**Author:** David, after pretending to be insane in order to escape from King Achish (1 Samuel 21:10–15)

**34** A Psalm of David, when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed.

- <sup>1</sup>I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise *shall* continually *be* in my mouth.
- <sup>2</sup>My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear *thereof*, and be glad.
- <sup>3</sup>O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.
- <sup>4</sup>I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.
- <sup>5</sup>They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.
- <sup>6</sup>This poor man cried, and the LORD heard *him*, and saved him out of all his troubles.
- <sup>7</sup>The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.
- <sup>8</sup>O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man *that* trusteth in him.
- <sup>9</sup>O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for *there is* no want to them that fear him.

**34:1**  
Ps 71:6  
Eph 5:20

**34:2**  
Jer 9:24

**34:5**  
Ps 36:9

**34:7**  
Dan 6:22

**34:8**  
1 Pet 2:3

**34:9**  
Pss 23:1; 31:23

**33:9** *fast:* firm. **33:10** *heathen:* nations. *nought:* nothing. *devices:* plans. **33:17** *vain thing:* false hope. **34:5** *lightened:* radiant. **34:9** *there is no want to them that:* they lack nothing who.

**33:11** God's plan stands forever! Are you frustrated by inconsistencies you see in others, or even in yourself? God is completely trustworthy—his intentions never change. The Bible promises that good and perfect gifts come to us from the Creator who never changes (James 1:17). When you wonder if there is anyone whom you can trust, remember that God is completely consistent. Let him counsel you.

**33:16, 17** The *horse* refers to military strength. Because God rules and overrules every nation, leaders should never put their trust in their physical power. Military might is not the ground of our hope. Our hope is in God and in his gracious offer to save us if we will trust in him.

**33:18, 19** This is not an ironclad guarantee that all believers will escape starvation or violent death. Thousands of Christian saints have been beaten to death, whipped, fed to lions, or executed (Romans 8:35, 36; Hebrews 11:32–40). God can (and often does) miraculously deliver his followers from pain and death, though sometimes, for purposes known only to him, he chooses not to. When faced with these harsh realities, we must focus on the wise judgments of God. David was pleading for God's watchful care and protection. In times of crisis, we can place our hope in God.

**34:1ff** God promises great blessings to his people, but many of these blessings require active participation. He will free us from fear (34:4), deliver us from trouble (34:6), guard us (34:7), show

us kindness (34:8), supply our needs (34:9), listen when we talk to him (34:15), and redeem us (34:22), but we must do our part. We can appropriate his blessings when we seek him (34:4, 10), cry out to him (34:6, 17), trust him (34:8), fear him (34:7, 9), keep from lying (34:13), turn from sin, do good, and seek peace (34:14), have humble hearts (34:18), and serve him (34:22).

**34:8** "Taste and see" does not mean, "Check out God's credentials." Instead, it is a warm invitation: "Try this; I know you'll like it." When we take that first step of obedience in following God, we will discover that he is good and kind. When we begin the Christian life, our knowledge of God is partial and incomplete. As we trust him daily, we experience how good he is.

**34:9** You say you belong to the Lord, but do you fear—that is, revere—him? To fear the Lord means to show him deep respect, reverence, and honor. We demonstrate this attitude by humility and genuine worship. Abraham (Genesis 17:2–4), Moses (Exodus 3:5, 6), and the Israelites (Exodus 19:16–24) showed this kind of fear of the Lord.

**34:9, 10** At first we may question David's statement, because we seem to lack many good things. This is not a blanket promise that all Christians will have everything they want. Instead, this is David's praise for God's goodness—all those who call upon God in their need will be answered, sometimes in unexpected ways.

Remember, God knows what we need, and our deepest needs

**34:10**  
Ps 84:11

**34:11**  
Ps 111:10

**34:12**  
1 Pet 3:10-12

**34:13**  
Jas 1:26  
1 Pet 2:22

**34:14**  
Ps 37:27  
Rom 14:18-19  
Heb 12:14

**34:15**  
Job 36:7  
Ps 33:18-19

**34:16**  
Pss 9:6; 109:15

**34:18**  
Pss 51:17; 145:18  
Isa 57:15

**34:21**  
Ps 94:23

**34:22**  
Ps 71:23

<sup>10</sup>The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good *thing*.

<sup>11</sup>Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

<sup>12</sup>What man is *he that desireth life, and loveth many days*, that he may see good?

<sup>13</sup>Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.

<sup>14</sup>Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.

<sup>15</sup>The eyes of the LORD *are* upon the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their cry.

<sup>16</sup>The face of the LORD *is* against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

<sup>17</sup>*The righteous cry*, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.

<sup>18</sup>The LORD *is* nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

<sup>19</sup>Many *are* the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.

<sup>20</sup>He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.

<sup>21</sup>Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.

<sup>22</sup>The LORD redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.

**Theme:** A prayer to God for help against those who try to inflict injury for no reason. When our enemies are unjust and lie about us, even when we do good to them, we can appeal to God who is always just.

**Author:** David, probably written when he was being hunted by Saul (1 Samuel 24)

## 35 *A Psalm of David*

<sup>1</sup>Plead *my cause*, O LORD, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me.

<sup>2</sup>Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for mine help.

<sup>3</sup>Draw out also the spear, and stop *the way* against them that persecute me: say unto my soul, *I am* thy salvation.

<sup>4</sup>Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul: let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt.

<sup>5</sup>Let them be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the LORD chase *them*.

<sup>6</sup>Let their way be dark and slippery: and let the angel of the LORD persecute them.

**34:10** want: lack. **34:13** guile: deceit. **34:18** of a contrite: crushed in. **35:2** shield and buckler: large and small shields.

**35:1**  
Ps 56:1-2  
Isa 49:25

**35:2**  
Ps 91:4

**35:3**  
Ps 62:2

**35:4**  
Pss 40:14; 70:2-3

**35:5**  
Job 21:18  
Pss 1:4; 83:13  
Isa 29:5

**35:6**  
Ps 73:18  
Jer 23:12

are spiritual. Even though many Christians face unbearable poverty and hardship, they still have enough spiritual nourishment to live for God. David was saying that to have God is to have all you really need. God is enough.

If you feel you don't have everything you need, ask: (1) Is this really a need? (2) Is this really good for me? (3) Is this the best time for me to have what I desire? Even if you answer yes to all three questions, God may allow you to go without to help you grow more dependent on him. He may want you to learn that you need *him* more than having your immediate desires met.

**34:11-14** The Bible often connects the fear of the Lord (love and reverence for him) with obedience. "Fear God, and keep his commandments" (Ecclesiastes 12:13); "If a man love me, he will keep my words" (John 14:23). David said that a person who fears the Lord doesn't lie, turns from sin, does good, and promotes peace. Reverence is much more than sitting quietly in church. It includes obeying God in the way we speak and the way we treat others.

**34:14** Some may think that peace should come with no effort. But David explained that we are to seek and pursue peace. Paul echoed this thought in Romans 12:18. A person who wants peace cannot be argumentative and contentious. Since peaceful relationships come from our efforts at peacemaking, work hard at living in peace with others each day.

**34:18, 19** We often wish we could escape troubles—the pain of grief, loss, sorrow, and failure; or even the small daily frustrations that constantly wear us down. God promises to be our source of power, courage, and wisdom, helping us through our problems.

Sometimes he chooses to deliver us from those problems. When trouble strikes, don't get frustrated with God. Instead, humbly admit that you need God's help and thank him for being by your side.

**34:20** This is a prophecy about Christ when he was crucified. Although it was the Roman custom to break the legs of the victim to speed his death, not one of Jesus' bones was broken (John 19:32-37). In addition to the prophetic meaning, David was pleading for God's protection in the midst of crisis.

**35:1ff** This is one of the "imprecatory" (cursing) psalms that call upon God to deal with enemies. These psalms sound extremely harsh, but we must remember the following: (1) David was fleeing from men who were unjustly seeking to kill him. As God's anointed king over a nation called to annihilate the evil people of the land, this was difficult for David to understand. (2) David's call for justice was sincere; it was not a cover for vengeance. He truly wanted to seek God's perfect ideal for his nation. (3) David did not say *he* would take vengeance, but gave the matter to God. These are merely his suggestions. (4) These psalms use hyperbole (or overstatement). They were meant to motivate others to take a strong stand against sin and evil.

Cruelty is far removed from many people's experience, but it is a daily reality to others. God promises to help the persecuted and bring judgment on unrepentant sinners. When we pray for justice to be done, we are praying as David did. When Christ returns, the wicked will be punished.



<sup>7</sup>For without cause have they hid for me their net *in a pit, which* without cause they have digged for my soul.

<sup>8</sup>Let destruction come upon him at unawares; and let his net that he hath hid catch himself: into that very destruction let him fall.

<sup>9</sup>And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD: it shall rejoice in his salvation.

<sup>10</sup>All my bones shall say, LORD, who *is* like unto thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him?

<sup>11</sup>False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge *things* that I knew not.

<sup>12</sup>They rewarded me evil for good to the spoiling of my soul.

<sup>13</sup>But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing *was* sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom.

<sup>14</sup>I behaved myself as though *he had been* my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth *for his* mother.

<sup>15</sup>But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together: *yea*, the objects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew *it* not; they did tear *me*, and ceased not:

<sup>16</sup>With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth.

<sup>17</sup>LORD, how long wilt thou look on? rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions.

<sup>18</sup>I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people.

<sup>19</sup>Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me: *neither* let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause.

<sup>20</sup>For they speak not peace: but they devise deceitful matters against *them that are* quiet in the land.

<sup>21</sup>Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me, *and* said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen *it*.

<sup>22</sup>*This* thou hast seen, O LORD: keep not silence: O Lord, be not far from me.

<sup>23</sup>Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment, *even* unto my cause, my God and my LORD.

<sup>24</sup>Judge me, O LORD my God, according to thy righteousness; and let them not rejoice over me.

<sup>25</sup>Let them not say in their hearts, Ah, so would we have it: let them not say, We have swallowed him up.

<sup>26</sup>Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together that rejoice at mine hurt: let them be clothed with shame and dishonour that magnify *themselves* against me.

<sup>27</sup>Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Let the LORD be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.

<sup>28</sup>And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness *and* of thy praise all the day long.

**35:7**  
Pss 69:4; 109:3

**35:8**  
Ps 9:15  
Isa 47:11  
1 Thes 5:3

**35:9**  
Isa 61:10  
Luke 1:47

**35:10**  
Exod 15:11-12  
Pss 18:17; 37:14

**35:11**  
Ps 27:12

**35:12**  
Ps 38:20  
John 10:32

**35:13**  
Job 30:25  
Ps 69:10

**35:16**  
Lam 2:16

**35:17**  
Pss 13:1; 22:20-21  
Hab 1:13

**35:18**  
Ps 22:23, 25

**35:19**  
Pss 13:4; 38:16, 19;  
69:4  
†John 15:25

**35:21**  
Pss 22:13; 40:15

**35:22**  
Exod 3:7  
Ps 10:14

**35:24**  
Pss 9:4; 43:1

**35:25**  
Ps 56:1  
Lam 2:16

**35:26**  
Pss 38:16; 40:14

**35:27**  
Pss 40:16; 70:4;  
149:4-5

**35:28**  
Ps 51:14-15

**Theme:** God's faithfulness, justice, and love are contrasted with the sinful hearts of men and women. In spite of our fallen condition, God pours out his love on those who know him.

**Author:** David

## 36 *To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David the servant of the LORD*

<sup>1</sup>The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, *that there is* no fear of God before his eyes.

<sup>2</sup>For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful.

<sup>3</sup>The words of his mouth *are* iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise, *and* to do good.

**35:10** *spoileth:* plunders. **35:13** *into mine own bosom:* back to me. **35:15** *objects:* attackers. **35:17** *darling:* precious life. **35:18** *much:* many. **35:23** *judgment:* defense. **35:24** *judge:* vindicate. **35:26** *magnify:* exalt. **36:3** *left off:* ceased.

**36:1**  
†Rom 3:18

**36:3**  
Ps 10:7  
Jer 4:22

**35:13** "My prayer returned into mine own bosom" means "my prayer went unanswered." When our deliverance is delayed, we may assume God hasn't answered our prayer. God hears every prayer, but he answers according to his wisdom. Don't let the absence of an immediate answer cause you to doubt or resent God. Instead let it be an occasion to deepen your faith.

**35:21-23** David cried out to God to defend him when people wrongly accused him. If you are unjustly accused, your natural

reaction may be to lash out in revenge or to give a detailed defense of your every move. Ask God to fight the battle for you. He will clear your name in the eyes of those who really matter.

**36:1** Because the wicked have no fear of God, nothing restrains them from sinning. They plunge ahead as if nothing will happen to them. But God is just and is only delaying their punishment. This knowledge should hold us back from sinning. Let the fear of God do its work in you to keep you from sin. In your gratitude for God's love and mercy, don't ignore his justice.



36:4  
Prov 4:16  
Isa 65:2  
Mic 2:1

36:5  
Pss 57:10; 103:11;  
108:4

36:6  
Pss 104:14-15;  
145:16-17  
Rom 11:33

36:7  
Ruth 2:12  
Pss 91:4; 139:17-18

36:8  
Isa 25:6  
Rev 22:1

36:9  
1 Pet 2:9  
Ps 140:10

37:1  
Ps 73:3  
Prov 3:31

37:2  
Job 14:2  
Ps 90:5-6

37:3  
Deut 30:20  
Ps 62:8  
Isa 40:11

37:4  
Ps 145:19  
Isa 58:14

37:5  
Prov 16:3  
1 Pet 5:7

37:6  
Isa 58:8, 10  
Mic 7:9

37:7  
Jer 12:1

37:8  
Eph 4:31  
Col 3:8

37:9  
Isa 60:21

37:10  
Job 24:24

37:11  
Matt 5:3, 5

<sup>4</sup>He deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way *that is* not good; he abhorreth not evil.

<sup>5</sup>Thy mercy, O LORD, *is* in the heavens; and thy faithfulness *reacheth* unto the clouds.

<sup>6</sup>Thy righteousness *is* like the great mountains; thy judgments *are* a great deep: O LORD, thou preservest man and beast.

<sup>7</sup>How excellent *is* thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.

<sup>8</sup>They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.

<sup>9</sup>For with thee *is* the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.

<sup>10</sup>O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart.

<sup>11</sup>Let not the foot of pride come against me, and let not the hand of the wicked remove me.

<sup>12</sup>There are the workers of iniquity fallen: they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise.

**Theme:** Trust in the Lord and wait patiently for him to act. This psalm vividly contrasts the wicked person with the upright.

**Author:** David

## 37 A Psalm of David

<sup>1</sup>Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.

<sup>2</sup>For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.

<sup>3</sup>Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

<sup>4</sup>Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

<sup>5</sup>Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring *it* to pass.

<sup>6</sup>And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.

<sup>7</sup>Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

<sup>8</sup>Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.

<sup>9</sup>For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.

<sup>10</sup>For yet a little while, and the wicked *shall not be*: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it *shall not be*.

<sup>11</sup>But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

**36:4** *deviseth mischief*: plots evil. *setteth himself in*: commits himself to. **37:6** *judgment*: justice. **37:7** *devices*: schemes. **37:8** *in any wise to do evil*: because it only leads to evil. **37:10** *consider*: look for. **37:11** *meek*: humble.

**36:5-8** In contrast to evil men and their wicked plots that end in failure, God will triumph. He is merciful, righteous, and kind. His mercy is greater than the heavens; his faithfulness reaches the clouds; his righteousness is as solid as a mountain; his judgments are as full of wisdom as the oceans are with water. We need not fear evil people because we know God loves us, judges evil, and will care for us throughout eternity.

**36:9** This metaphor for God—"fountain of life"—gives us a sense of fresh, cleansing water that gives life to the spiritually thirsty. This same picture is used in Jeremiah 2:13, where God is called the "fountain of living waters." Jesus spoke of himself as living water that could quench thirst forever and give eternal life (John 4:14).

**37:1** We should never envy the wicked, even though some may be extremely popular or excessively rich. No matter how much they have, it will fade and vanish like grass that withers and dies. Those who follow God live differently from the wicked and, in the end, will have greater treasures in heaven. What the unbeliever gets may last a lifetime, if he is lucky. What you get from following God lasts forever.

**37:4, 5** David calls us to take delight in the Lord and to commit everything we have and do to him. But how do we do this? To *commit* ourselves to the Lord means entrusting everything—our

lives, families, jobs, possessions—to his control and guidance. To commit ourselves to the Lord means to trust him (37:5), believing that he can care for us better than we can ourselves. We should be willing to wait patiently (37:7) for him to work out what is best for us.

To *delight* in someone means to experience great pleasure and joy in his or her presence. This happens only when we know that person well. Thus, to delight in the Lord, we must know him better. Knowledge of God's great love for us will indeed give us delight.

**37:8, 9** Anger, worry, and losing our temper are very destructive emotions. They reveal a lack of faith that God loves us and is in control. We should not fret and worry; instead, we should trust in the Lord, giving ourselves to him for his use and safekeeping. When you dwell on your problems, you will become anxious and angry. But if you concentrate on God and his goodness, you will find peace. Where do you focus your attention?

**37:11** Meekness hardly seems the proper weapon to deal with enemies. But God's warfare must be carried out with calm faith, humility before God, and hope in his deliverance. Jesus, likewise, promises a sure reward for those with humble attitudes (Matthew 5:5).

- 12 The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth. **37:12**  
Ps 35:16
- 13 The Lord shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming. **37:13**  
Ps 2:4
- 14 The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, *and* to slay such as be of upright conversation. **37:14**  
Pss 11:2; 35:10
- 15 Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken. **37:15**  
Pss 9:16; 46:9
- 16 A little that a righteous man hath *is* better than the riches of many wicked. **37:16**  
Prov 15:16; 16:8
- 17 For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the Lord upholdeth the righteous. **37:17**  
Job 38:15  
Ps 10:15
- 18 The Lord knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever. **37:19**  
Job 5:20  
Ps 33:18-19
- 19 They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied. **37:20**  
Pss 68:2; 73:27; 102:3
- 20 But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord *shall be* as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away. **37:22**  
Job 5:3  
Prov 3:33
- 21 The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again: but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth. **37:23**  
1 Sam 2:9  
Pss 40:2; 147:11
- 22 For *such as be* blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and *they that be* cursed of him shall be cut off. **37:24**  
Pss 145:14; 147:6  
Prov 24:15-16
- 23 The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way. **37:25**  
Isa 41:17  
Heb 13:5
- 24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth *him with* his hand. **37:26**  
Ps 37:21
- 25 I have been young, and *now* am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. **37:27**  
Ps 34:14
- 26 He *is* ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed *is* blessed. **37:28**  
Pss 11:7; 21:10
- 27 Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore. **37:29**  
Ps 37:9, 18
- 28 For the Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off. **37:31**  
Ps 40:8  
Isa 51:7
- 29 The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever. **37:32**  
Pss 10:8; 37:14
- 30 The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment. **37:33**  
2 Pet 2:9
- 31 The law of his God *is* in his heart; none of his steps shall slide. **37:34**  
Pss 27:14; 37:9
- 32 The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him. **37:35**  
Job 5:3
- 33 The Lord will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged. **37:38**  
Pss 1:1; 73:19
- 34 Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see *it*. **37:39**  
Pss 3:8; 9:9
- 35 I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. **37:14** *conversation: conduct.* **37:20** *consume: vanish.* **37:28** *judgment: justice.* **37:35** *bay tree: tree in its native soil.* **37:37** *mark the perfect: consider the blameless.*
- 36 Yet he passed away, and, lo, he *was* not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found. **37:21**
- 37 Mark the perfect *man*, and behold the upright: for the end of *that* man *is* peace. **37:23, 24**
- 38 But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off. **37:25**
- 39 But the salvation of the righteous *is* of the Lord: *he is* their strength in the time of trouble. **37:26**
- 40 And the Lord shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him. **37:27**

**37:21** You can tell a lot about a person's character by the way he or she handles money. The wicked person steals under the guise of borrowing. The good person gives to the needy. Wicked people, therefore, focus on themselves, while good people look to the welfare of others.

**37:23, 24** A good person is one who follows God, trusts him, and tries to do his will. God watches over and directs every step that person takes. If you would like to have God direct your way, then seek his advice before you step out.

**37:25** Because children starve today, as they did in David's time, what did David mean by these words? The children of the righteous need not go hungry because other believers can help out in their time of need. In David's day, Israel obeyed God's laws, which ensured that the poor were treated fairly and mercifully. As long as Israel was obedient, enough food would be available for everyone. When Israel forgot God, the rich took care only of themselves, and the poor suffered (Amos 2:6, 7).

When we see a Christian brother or sister suffering, we can respond in one of three ways: (1) We can say, as Job's friends did, that the afflicted person brought this on himself. (2) We can say that this is a test to help the person develop more patience and trust in God. (3) We can help the person in need. David would approve of only the last option. Although many governments today have their own programs for helping those in need, this is no excuse for ignoring the poor and needy within our reach.

**Theme:** Sorrow for sin brings hope. God alone is the true source of healing and protection for those who confess their sins to him.

**Author:** David

## 38 *A Psalm of David, to bring to remembrance*

**38:1**  
Ps 6:1

<sup>1</sup>O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.

**38:2**  
Job 6:4  
Ps 32:4

<sup>2</sup>For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore.

**38:3**  
Pss 6:2; 31:9-10  
Isa 1:5-6

<sup>3</sup>*There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin.*

<sup>4</sup>For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.

**38:4**  
Ezra 9:6

<sup>5</sup>My wounds stink *and* are corrupt because of my foolishness.

**38:5**  
Ps 69:5

<sup>6</sup>I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long.

**38:6**  
Ps 35:14

<sup>7</sup>For my loins are filled with a loathsome *disease*: and *there is no soundness in my flesh*.

**38:7**  
Ps 102:3-4

<sup>8</sup>I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.

**38:8**  
Job 3:24  
Ps 22:1

<sup>9</sup>Lord, all my desire *is* before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee.

<sup>10</sup>My heart panteth, my strength faileth me: as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me.

**38:9**  
Ps 10:17

<sup>11</sup>My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off.

**38:10**  
Pss 6:7; 31:10

<sup>12</sup>They also that seek after my life lay snares *for me*: and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long.

**38:12**  
Pss 35:20; 54:3;  
140:5

<sup>13</sup>But I, as a deaf *man*, heard not; and *I was* as a dumb man *that* openeth not his mouth.

**38:15**  
Ps 17:6

<sup>14</sup>Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth *are* no reproofs.

<sup>15</sup>For in thee, O LORD, do I hope: thou wilt hear, O Lord my God.

**38:16**  
Pss 13:4; 35:26

<sup>16</sup>For I said, *Hear me*, lest *otherwise* they should rejoice over me: when my foot slippeth, they magnify *themselves* against me.

**38:17**  
Ps 13:2

<sup>17</sup>For I *am* ready to halt, and my sorrow *is* continually before me.

**38:18**  
2 Cor 7:9-10

<sup>18</sup>For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.

<sup>19</sup>But mine enemies *are* lively, *and* they are strong: and they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied.

**38:19**  
Pss 18:17; 35:19

<sup>20</sup>They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries; because I follow *the thing that good is*.

**38:20**  
Ps 35:12  
1 Jn 3:12

<sup>21</sup>Forsake me not, O LORD: O my God, be not far from me.

**38:21**  
Pss 22:19; 35:22

<sup>22</sup>Make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation.

**38:22**  
Pss 27:1; 40:13, 17

**38:2** *stick fast*: pierce deeply. *presseth me sore*: presses me down. **38:3** *soundness*: health. **38:5** *stink and are corrupt*: grow foul and fester. **38:7** *a loathsome disease*: inflammation. **38:8** *sore*: severely. **38:10** *panteth*: pounds. **38:11** *sore*: plague. **38:19** *lively*: vigorous.

**38:1ff** This is called a penitential psalm because David expressed sorrow for his sin (38:18). He stated that his sin led to health problems (38:1–8) and separated him from God and others, causing extreme loneliness (38:9–14). He then confessed his sin and repented (38:15–22).

**38:1** As a child might cry to his father, so David cried to God. David was not saying, “Don’t punish me,” but “Don’t punish me while you are angry.” He acknowledged that he deserved to be punished, but asked that God temper his discipline with mercy. Like children, we are free to ask for mercy, but should not deny that we deserve punishment.

**38:2–4** David saw his anguish as judgment from God for his sins. Although God does not always send physical illness to punish us for sin, this verse and others in Scripture (Acts 12:21–23; 1 Corinthians 11:30–32) indicate that he does so in certain circumstances. Our sin can have physical or mental side effects that can cause great suffering. Sometimes God has to punish his children in order to bring them back to himself (Hebrews 12:5–11). When we repent of our sin, God promises to forgive us. He delivers us from sin’s eternal consequences, although he does not promise to undo all of sin’s earthly consequences.

**38:13, 14** Being silent can be extremely difficult when others

tear us down because we want to protect our reputation. We find it difficult to do nothing while they assault something so precious to us. But we don’t need to lash out in revenge or justify our position; we can trust God to protect our reputation. Jesus was silent before his accusers (Luke 23:9, 10); he left his case in God’s hands (1 Peter 2:21–24). That is a good place to leave our case too!

**Theme:** Apart from God, life is fleeting and empty. This is an appeal for God's mercy because life is so brief.

**Author:** David

## 39 *To the chief Musician, even to Jeduthun, A Psalm of David*

<sup>1</sup>I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.

<sup>2</sup>I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, *even* from good; and my sorrow was stirred.

<sup>3</sup>My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned: *then* spake I with my tongue,

<sup>4</sup>LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it *is*; *that* I may know how frail I *am*.

<sup>5</sup>Behold, thou hast made my days *as* an handbreadth; and mine age *is* as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state *is* altogether vanity. Selah.

<sup>6</sup>Surely every man walketh in a vain shew: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up *riches*, and knoweth not who shall gather them.

<sup>7</sup>And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope *is* in thee.

<sup>8</sup>Deliver me from all my transgressions: make me not the reproach of the foolish.

<sup>9</sup>I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst *it*.

<sup>10</sup>Remove thy stroke away from me: I am consumed by the blow of thine hand.

<sup>11</sup>When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth: surely every man *is* vanity. Selah.

<sup>12</sup>Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: for I *am* a stranger with thee, *and* a sojourner, as all my fathers *were*.

<sup>13</sup>O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.

**39:1**

Pss 34:13; 141:3  
Jas 3:2, 5-12

**39:4**

Pss 78:39; 90:12;  
103:14-15

**39:5**

Job 14:2  
Pss 62:9; 89:47;  
144:4

**39:6**

Ps 127:2  
Luke 12:20  
1 Pet 1:24

**39:8**

Pss 51:9; 79:4, 9

**39:9**

Job 2:10

**39:10**

Job 9:34  
Ps 32:4

**39:11**

Job 13:27-28  
Ps 90:7  
2 Pet 2:16

**39:12**

Ps 102:1  
Heb 11:13  
1 Pet 2:11

**39:13**

Job 10:20; 14:6

**Theme:** Doing God's will sometimes means waiting patiently. While we wait, we can love God, serve others, and tell others about him.

**Author:** David

## 40 *To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David*

<sup>1</sup>I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.

<sup>2</sup>He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, *and* established my goings.

<sup>3</sup>And he hath put a new song in my mouth, *even* praise unto our God: many shall see *it*, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.

<sup>4</sup>Blessed *is* that man that maketh the LORD his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.

**40:1**

Pss 27:14; 34:15

**40:2**

Pss 27:5; 69:1-2  
Jer 38:6

**40:3**

Pss 32:7; 33:3; 64:9

**40:4**

Ps 84:12

**39:1** *take heed to:* guard. *bridle:* muzzle. **39:5** *an handbreadth:* long as my hand. *verily:* surely. *altogether vanity:* but a breath. **39:6** *in a vain shew:* as a shadow. *disquieted in vain:* in turmoil for nothing. **39:11** *vanity:* but a breath. **39:12** *sojourner:* traveler. **39:13** *go hence:* depart. **40:1** *inclined unto:* turned to. **40:2** *goings:* steps.

**39:1-3** David resolved not to sin with his tongue; that is, he decided not to complain to other people about God's treatment of him. David certainly had reason to complain. He was the anointed king of Israel, but had to wait many years before taking the throne. Then one of his sons tried to kill him and become king instead. But when David could not keep still any longer, he took his complaints directly to God. We all have complaints about job, money, or situations, but complaining before others may make them think that God cannot take care of us. It may also look as if we blame God for our troubles. Instead, like David, we should take our complaints directly to God. He can take it.

**39:4** Life is short no matter how long we live. If we have something important we want to do, we must not put it off for a better day. Ask yourself, "If I had only six months to live, what would I do?" Tell someone that you love him or her? Deal with an undisciplined area in your life? Tell someone about Jesus? Since life is short, don't neglect what is truly important.

**39:5, 6** The brevity of life is a theme throughout the books of Psalms, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. Christ also spoke about it (Luke

12:20). Ironically, people spend so much time securing their lives on earth and spend little or no thought on where they will spend eternity. David realized that amassing riches and busily accomplishing worldly tasks would make no difference in eternity. Few people understand that their only hope is in the Lord. (For other verses on the brevity of life, see Ecclesiastes 2:18 and James 4:14.)

**39:10** What did David mean when he asked God to stop hitting him? This is a metaphor of parental discipline. It may also be a picture of the difficulties David was facing that caused him to feel as if he were being struck. Evidently David thought God was disciplining him, punishing him for his sins. David was expressing his feelings to God, yet David also submitted himself to his powerful and loving heavenly Father.

**40:1-3** Waiting for God to help us is not easy, but David received four benefits from waiting: (1) God lifted him out of his despair, (2) God set his feet on firm ground, (3) God established his goings (steadied him as he walked), and (4) God gave him a new song. Often blessings cannot be received unless we go through the trial of waiting.

**40:5**  
Job 5:9  
Pss 136:4;  
139:17-18  
Isa 55:8

**40:6-8**  
1 Sam 15:22  
Jer 7:22-23  
Mic 6:6-8  
<sup>1</sup>Heb 10:5-7

**40:8**  
Ps 37:31  
2 Cor 3:3  
John 4:34  
Rom 7:22

**40:9**  
Pss 22:25; 119:13

**40:10**  
Ps 89:1  
Acts 20:20, 27

**40:11**  
Ps 61:7

**40:12**  
Pss 18:5; 38:4;  
73:26; 116:3

**40:13-17**  
<sup>1</sup>Ps 70:1-5

**40:14**  
Pss 35:4, 26; 70:2-3

**40:16**  
Pss 35:27; 70:4

**40:17**  
Ps 70:5

<sup>5</sup>Many, O LORD my God, *are* thy wonderful works *which* thou hast done, and thy thoughts *which are* to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: *if I* would declare and speak *of them*, they are more than can be numbered.

<sup>6</sup>Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.

<sup>7</sup>Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book *it is* written of me,

<sup>8</sup>I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law *is* within my heart.

<sup>9</sup>I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest.

<sup>10</sup>I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation.

<sup>11</sup>Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD: let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me.

<sup>12</sup>For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.

<sup>13</sup>Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me: O LORD, make haste to help me.

<sup>14</sup>Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it; let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish me evil.

<sup>15</sup>Let them be desolate for a reward of their shame that say unto me, Aha, aha.

<sup>16</sup>Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: let such as love thy salvation say continually, The LORD be magnified.

<sup>17</sup>But *I am* poor and needy; *yet* the Lord thinketh upon me: thou *art* my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.

**Theme:** A prayer for God's mercy when feeling sick or abandoned. When we're sick or when everyone deserts us, God remains at our side.

**Author:** David

## 41 *To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David*

**41:1**  
Pss 37:19; 82:3-4  
Prov 14:21

**41:2**  
Ps 37:22, 28

**41:4**  
Pss 6:2; 51:4; 103:3

**41:5**  
Ps 38:12

**41:6**  
Ps 12:2

**41:7**  
Ps 56:5

<sup>1</sup>Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble.

<sup>2</sup>The LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive; *and* he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies.

<sup>3</sup>The LORD will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.

<sup>4</sup>I said, LORD, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee.

<sup>5</sup>Mine enemies speak evil of me, When shall he die, and his name perish?

<sup>6</sup>And if he come to see *me*, he speaketh vanity: his heart gathereth iniquity to itself; *when* he goeth abroad, he telleth *it*.

<sup>7</sup>All that hate me whisper together against me: against me do they devise my hurt.

**40:5** to us-ward: toward us. **40:7** volume: scroll. **40:9** refrained: restrained. **40:12** compassed: surrounded. **40:16** magnified: exalted. **40:17** make no tarrying: do not delay. **41:6** vanity: falsely. **41:7** devise my hurt: imagine the worst.

**40:6** The religious ritual of David's day involved sacrificing animals in the Tabernacle. Today we often make rituals of going to church, taking Communion, or paying tithes. These activities are empty if our reasons for doing them are selfish. God does not want these sacrifices and offerings without an attitude of devotion to him. The prophet Samuel told Saul, "To obey is better than sacrifice" (1 Samuel 15:22). Make sure you give God the obedience and lifelong service he desires from you.

**40:7, 8** Jesus portrayed this attitude of obeying and serving God (John 4:34; 5:30). He came as the prophets foretold, proclaiming the Good News of God's righteousness and forgiveness of sins. In Hebrews 10:5-10, verses 6-8 are applied to Jesus.

**40:9, 10** God shows his righteousness and faithfulness to his people in his offer of salvation. David boldly proclaimed this to those around him. When we feel the impact of God's righteousness on our lives, we cannot keep it hidden. We want to tell other

people what God has done for us. If God's faithfulness has changed your life, don't be timid. Since it is natural to share a good bargain with others or recommend a skillful doctor, then it should also be natural to share what God has done for us.

**40:10** When we think of faithfulness, a friend or a spouse may come to mind. People who are faithful to us accept and love us, even when we are unlovable. Faithful people keep their promises, whether promises of support or marriage vows. God's faithfulness is like human faithfulness, only perfect. His love is absolute, and his promises are irrevocable. He loves us in spite of our constant bent toward sin, and he keeps all the promises he has made to us, even when we break our promises to him.

**41:1** The Bible often speaks of God's care for the poor and of his blessing those who share this concern. God does not want the poor to suffer. God wants our generosity to reflect his own free giving; as he has blessed us, we should bless others.



<sup>8</sup>An evil disease, *say they*, cleaveth fast unto him: and *now* that he lieth he shall rise up no more.

<sup>9</sup>Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up *his* heel against me.

<sup>10</sup>But thou, O LORD, be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them.

<sup>11</sup>By this I know that thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.

<sup>12</sup>And as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and settest me before thy face for ever.

<sup>13</sup>Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen.

## B. THE SECOND BOOK OF PSALMS (42:1—72:20)

These psalms include a prayer for rescue, a call to worship, a confession of sin, an encouragement to trust God, a psalm for those hurt by friends, a prayer for those who have been slandered, and a missionary psalm. These psalms can help us retain a sense of wonder in our worship.

**Theme:** A thirst for God. When you feel lonely or depressed, meditate on God's kindness and love.

**Author:** The sons of Korah, who were Temple musicians and assistants

## 42 *To the chief Musician, Maschil, for the sons of Korah*

<sup>1</sup>As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

<sup>2</sup>My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?

<sup>3</sup>My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, *Where is thy God?*

<sup>4</sup>When I remember these *things*, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.

<sup>5</sup>Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and *why* art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him *for* the help of his countenance.

<sup>6</sup>O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.

<sup>7</sup>Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.

<sup>8</sup>*Yet* the LORD will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song *shall be* with me, *and* my prayer unto the God of my life.

<sup>9</sup>I will say unto God my rock, *Why* hast thou forgotten me? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

<sup>10</sup>As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, *Where is thy God?*

**41:8** *cleaveth fast unto:* clings to. **41:10** *requite:* repay. **42:1** *hart:* deer. **42:3** *meat:* food. **42:4** *that kept holyday:* keeping the festival. **42:7** *waterspouts:* waterfalls.

**41:9**  
Job 19:19  
Ps 55:12-13, 20  
Jer 20:10  
<sup>†</sup>Mark 14:18  
<sup>†</sup>John 13:18

**41:10**  
Ps 3:3

**41:11**  
Pss 25:2; 37:23-24;  
147:11

**41:12**  
Job 36:7  
Pss 21:6; 37:17

**41:13**  
Pss 72:18-19;  
106:48

**42:1**  
Ps 63:1

**42:2**  
Pss 43:4; 84:2;  
143:6  
Jer 10:10  
Rom 9:26

**42:3**  
Pss 79:10; 80:5  
Joel 2:17

**42:4**  
Job 30:16  
Ps 100:4  
Isa 30:29

**42:5**  
Pss 38:6; 77:3  
Lam 3:24

**42:6**  
Ps 61:2  
<sup>†</sup>Mark 14:34

**42:7**  
Ps 88:7  
Jon 2:3

**42:8**  
Job 35:10  
Pss 16:7; 57:3;  
77:6; 149:4-5

**42:9**  
Pss 17:9; 38:6

**41:9** This verse, as a prophecy of Christ's betrayal, is referred to in John 13:18. Judas, one of Jesus' 12 disciples, had spent three years learning from Jesus, traveling and eating with him (Mark 3:14-19), and handling the finances for the group. Eventually Judas, who knew Jesus extremely well, betrayed him (Matthew 26:14-16, 20-25).

**41:13** Psalms is divided into five books, and each one ends with a doxology or an expression of praise to God. The first book, including Psalms 1 through 41, takes us on a journey through suffering, sorrow, and great joy. It teaches us much about God's eternal love and care for us and how we should trust him even in the day-to-day experiences of life.

**42:1ff** Psalms 42-49 were written by the sons of Korah. Korah was a Levite who led a rebellion against Moses (Numbers 16:1-35). He was killed, but his descendants remained faithful to God and continued to serve God in the Temple. David appointed men from the clan of Korah to serve as choir leaders (1 Chronicles 6:31-38), and they continued to be Temple musicians for hundreds of years (2 Chronicles 20:18, 19).

**42:1, 2** As the life of a deer depends upon water, our lives depend upon God. Those who seek him and long to understand him find never-ending life. Feeling separated from God, this psalmist wouldn't rest until he restored his relationship with God, because he knew that life depended on it. Do you thirst for God?

**42:4, 5** The writer of this psalm was discouraged because he was exiled to a place far from Jerusalem and could not worship in the Temple. During these God-given holidays, the nation was to remember all that God had done for them. Many of these festivals are explained in the chart in Leviticus 23, p. 181.

**42:5, 6** Depression is one of the most common emotional ailments. One antidote for depression is to meditate on the record of God's goodness to his people. This will take your mind off the present situation and give hope that it will improve. It focuses your thoughts on God's ability to help you rather than on your inability to help yourself. When you feel depressed, take advantage of this psalm's antidepressant. Read the Bible's accounts of God's goodness, and meditate on them.



<sup>11</sup>Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, *who* is the health of my countenance, and my God.

**Theme:** Hope in a time of discouragement. In the face of discouragement, our only hope is in God.

**Author:** The sons of Korah (Temple assistants). Psalms 42 and 43 are one psalm in many Hebrew manuscripts.

43:1  
1 Sam 24:15  
Pss 26:1; 35:24

**43** <sup>1</sup>Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation: O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.

43:2  
Pss 42:9; 44:9

<sup>2</sup>For thou *art* the God of my strength: why dost thou cast me off? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

43:3  
Pss 36:9; 84:1

<sup>3</sup>O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.

43:4  
Pss 26:6; 33:2

<sup>4</sup>Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God.

<sup>5</sup>Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, *who* is the health of my countenance, and my God.

**Theme:** A plea for victory by the battle-weary and defeated. When it seems that God has let you down, don't despair. Instead, remember God's past deliverance and be confident that he will restore you.

**Author:** The sons of Korah (Temple assistants)

**44** *To the chief Musician for the sons of Korah, Maschil*

44:1  
Exod 12:26-27

<sup>1</sup>We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, *what* work thou didst in their days, in the times of old.

44:2  
Pss 78:55; 80:8

<sup>2</sup>*How* thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand, and plantedst them; *how* thou didst afflict the people, and cast them out.

44:3  
Deut 4:37  
Josh 24:12  
Ps 77:15

<sup>3</sup>For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them.

44:4  
Ps 74:12

<sup>4</sup>Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob.

44:5  
Ps 60:12

<sup>5</sup>Through thee will we push down our enemies: through thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us.

44:7  
Pss 53:5; 136:24

<sup>6</sup>For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me.

44:8  
Pss 30:12; 34:2

<sup>7</sup>But thou hast saved us from our enemies, and hast put them to shame that hated us.

44:9  
Pss 43:2; 60:10;  
74:1

<sup>8</sup>In God we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever. Selah.

44:10  
Josh 7:8, 12  
Ps 89:41

<sup>9</sup>But thou hast cast off, and put us to shame; and goest not forth with our armies.

<sup>10</sup>Thou makest us to turn back from the enemy: and they which hate us spoil for themselves.

44:11  
Deut 4:27; 28:64  
Ps 106:27  
Ezek 20:23-24

<sup>11</sup>Thou hast given us like sheep *appointed* for meat; and hast scattered us among the heathen.

43:5 *health*: help. 44:2 *heathen*: nations. 44:10 *spoil for themselves*: have plundered us. 44:11 *appointed for meat*: intended for slaughter.

**43:3** The "holy hill" is Mount Zion, in Jerusalem, the city that David named as Israel's capital. The Temple was built on this hill as the place for the people to meet God in worship and prayer.

**43:3, 4** The psalm writer asked God to send his light and truth to guide him to the Temple, where he would meet God. God's truth (see 1 John 2:27) provides the right path to follow, and God's light (see 1 John 1:5) provides the clear vision to follow it. If you feel surrounded by darkness and uncertainty, follow God's light and truth back to him.

**44:1ff** This psalm may have been sung at an occasion like the one in 2 Chronicles 20:18, 19, where the faithful Jehoshaphat was surrounded by enemies and the Levites sang to the Lord before the battle.

**44:1-3** Driving out the heathen refers to the conquest of Canaan (the Promised Land) described in the book of Joshua. God gave

the land to Israel, and they were to enter and drive out anyone who was wicked and determined to oppose God. Israel was told to settle the land and be a witness to the world of God's power and love. Surrounded by enemies, the psalm writer remembered what God had done for his people and took heart. We can have this same confidence in God when we feel attacked.

**44:9-22** Israel had been defeated despite their faith (44:17) and obedience (44:18) to God. The psalm writer could not understand why God allowed this to happen, but he did not give up hope of discovering the answer (44:17-22). Although he felt his suffering was undeserved, he revealed the real reason for it: He suffered because he was *serv*ing God. Paul quoted the psalm writer's complaint (Romans 8:36) to show that we must always be ready to face death for the cause of Christ. Thus, our suffering may not be a punishment, but a battle scar that demonstrates our loyalty.

- <sup>12</sup>Thou sellest thy people for nought, and dost not increase *thy wealth* by their price. **44:12**  
Isa 52:3-4
- <sup>13</sup>Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and a derision to them that are round about us. **44:13**  
Pss 79:4; 80:6
- <sup>14</sup>Thou makest us a byword among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people. **44:14**  
Ps 109:25  
Jer 24:9
- <sup>15</sup>My confusion is continually before me, and the shame of my face hath covered me, **44:15**  
Ps 119:61, 83, 109,  
141, 153, 176
- <sup>16</sup>For the voice of him that reproacheth and blasphemeth; by reason of the enemy and avenger. **44:16**  
Ps 119:61, 83, 109,  
141, 153, 176
- <sup>17</sup>All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant. **44:17**  
Job 23:11  
Ps 119:51, 157
- <sup>18</sup>Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way; **44:18**  
Job 3:5  
Ps 51:8
- <sup>19</sup>Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death. **44:19**  
Job 3:5  
Ps 51:8
- <sup>20</sup>If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god; **44:20**  
Ps 81:9
- <sup>21</sup>Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart. **44:21**  
Isa 53:7  
1Rom 8:36
- <sup>22</sup>Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter. **44:22**  
Isa 53:7  
1Rom 8:36
- <sup>23</sup>Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord? arise, cast us not off for ever. **44:23**  
Pss 7:6; 77:7; 78:65
- <sup>24</sup>Wherefore hidest thou thy face, *and* forgettest our affliction and our oppression? **44:24**  
Job 13:24  
Pss 42:9; 88:14
- <sup>25</sup>For our soul is bowed down to the dust: our belly cleaveth unto the earth. **44:25**  
Ps 119:25
- <sup>26</sup>Arise for our help, and redeem us for thy mercies' sake.

**Theme:** A poem to the king (possibly Solomon) on the occasion of his wedding. While this psalm was written for an historic occasion, it is also seen as a prophecy about Christ and his bride, the church, who will praise him throughout all generations.

**Author:** The sons of Korah (Temple assistants)

## 45

*To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim, for the sons of Korah, Maschil, A Song of loves*

<sup>1</sup>My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.

<sup>2</sup>Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever. **45:2**  
Ps 21:6  
Luke 4:22

<sup>3</sup>Gird thy sword upon *thy* thigh, O *most* mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty.

<sup>4</sup>And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness *and* righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. **45:4**  
Rev 6:2

<sup>5</sup>Thine arrows *are* sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; *whereby* the people fall under thee. **45:5**  
Ps 120:4  
Isa 5:28

<sup>6</sup>Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom *is* a right sceptre.

<sup>7</sup>Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. **45:6**  
Pss 93:2; 98:8-9  
1Heb 1:8-9

<sup>8</sup>All thy garments *smell* of myrrh, and aloes, *and* cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad. **45:7**  
Pss 11:7; 21:6; 33:5

<sup>9</sup>Kings' daughters *were* among thy honourable women: upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir. **45:8**  
Song 1:3; 4:13-14

**45:9**  
1 Kgs 2:19; 9:28  
Song 6:8  
Isa 13:12

**44:12** *nought*: a pittance. **44:16** *blasphemeth*: reviles. **44:18** *declined*: departed. **44:19** *sore broken*: crushed. *dragons*: jackals. **44:20** *strange*: foreign. **44:25** *belly cleaveth unto*: body clings to. **45:1** *inditing a good matter*: overflowing with a good thought. *touching*: concerning. **45:3** *gird*: fasten. **45:4** *meekness*: humility. *terrible*: awesome. **45:6** *right sceptre*: sceptre of righteousness. **45:7** *above thy fellows*: more than your companions.

**44:22-26** The writer cried to God to save his people for his mercies' sake; that is, because he is by nature merciful. Nothing can separate us from God's love, not even death (Romans 8:36-39). When you fear for your life, ask God for deliverance, and remember that even physical death cannot separate you from him.

**44:23-25** The psalm writer's words suggest that he did not believe God had left him. God was still the Ruler, but he seemed to be asleep, and the writer wondered why. In the New Testament, the disciples wondered why Jesus was asleep when they needed his help during a storm (Mark 4:35-41). In both cases, of course, God was ready to help, but he wished first to build faith in his followers.

**45:1ff** This is called a "messianic" psalm because it prophetically describes the Messiah's future relationship to the church, his body of believers. Verse 2 expresses God's abundant blessing on his Messiah; verses 6-8 find their true fulfillment in Christ (Hebrews 1:8, 9). The church is described as the bride of Christ in Revelation 19:7, 8; 21:9; 22:17.

**45:8, 9** Myrrh is a fragrant gum of an Arabian tree. It is generally used in perfumes. Aloes, a spice, may have come from sandalwood, a close-grained and fragrant wood often used for storage boxes or chests (see also Proverbs 7:16, 17; Song of Solomon 4:14). Cassia was probably made from flowers of the cinnamon tree. These expensive fragrances are appropriate for a king's wedding. The location of Ophir is unknown but believed to be in either Arabia or Africa. It was famous as a source of gold.

45:10  
Deut 21:13

<sup>10</sup>Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house;

45:12  
Ps 72:10-11

<sup>11</sup>So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him.

<sup>12</sup>And the daughter of Tyre *shall be there* with a gift; *even* the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour.

45:13  
Isa 61:10

<sup>13</sup>The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold.

45:14  
Song 1:4  
Ezek 16:9-13

<sup>14</sup>She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee.

<sup>15</sup>With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace.

<sup>16</sup>Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.

45:17  
Ps 138:4  
Mal 1:11

<sup>17</sup>I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.

**Theme:** God is always there to help, providing refuge, security, and peace. God's power is complete and his ultimate victory is certain. He will not fail to rescue those who love him.

**Author:** The sons of Korah (Temple assistants)

46:1  
Deut 4:7  
Pss 9:9; 14:6;  
62:7-8; 145:18

**46** *To the chief Musician for the sons of Korah, A Song upon Alamoth*

46:2  
Pss 18:7; 23:4; 82:5

<sup>1</sup>God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

46:4  
Ps 87:3  
Rev 3:12; 22:1

<sup>2</sup>Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

46:5  
Isa 12:6; 41:14  
Ezek 43:7  
Luke 1:54

<sup>3</sup>Though the waters thereof roar *and* be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.

46:6  
Ps 2:1  
Mic 1:4

<sup>4</sup>There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.

46:7  
Num 14:9  
2 Chr 13:12  
Ps 9:9

<sup>5</sup>God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, *and that* right early.

<sup>6</sup>The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted.

46:8  
Ps 66:5  
Isa 61:4  
Jer 51:43

<sup>7</sup>The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

<sup>8</sup>Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth.

45:12 *intreat:* seek. 46:3 *be troubled:* foam. 46:5 *and that right early:* at the break of day. 46:6 *heathen:* nations.

## PSALMS THAT HAVE INSPIRED HYMNS

Psalm 23	The King of Love My Shepherd Is My Shepherd Shall Supply My Need The Lord Is My Shepherd
Psalm 46	A Mighty Fortress Is Our God
Psalm 61	Hiding in Thee (O safe to the Rock that is higher than I . . .)
Psalm 87	Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken
Psalm 90	O God, Our Help in Ages Past
Psalm 100	All People that on Earth Do Dwell Before Jehovah's Aweful Throne
Psalm 103	Praise to the Lord, the Almighty
Psalm 104	O Worship the King, All Glorious Above
Psalm 126	Bringing in the Sheaves

**45:13–17** This beautiful section of poetry pictures Christ's bride, the church, with the richest of blessings as she unites forever with him (see Revelation 19:6–8; 21:2).

**46—48** Psalms 46—48 are hymns of praise, celebrating deliverance from some great foe. Psalm 46 may have been written when the Assyrian army invaded the land and surrounded Jerusalem (2 Kings 18:13—19:37).

**46:1–3** The fear of mountains or cities suddenly crumbling into the sea as a result of an earthquake or a nuclear blast haunts many people today. But the psalm writer says that even if the world were to end, we need not fear. In the face of utter destruction, he expressed a quiet confidence in God's ability to save him.

It seems impossible to consider the end of the world without fear, but the Bible is clear—God is our refuge even in the face of total destruction. He is not merely a temporary retreat; he is our eternal refuge and can provide strength in any circumstance.

**46:4, 5** Many great cities have rivers flowing through them, sustaining people's lives by making agriculture possible and facilitating trade with other cities. Jerusalem had no river, but it had God who, like a river, sustained the people's lives. As long as God lived among the people, the city was invincible. But when the people abandoned him, God no longer protected them, and Jerusalem fell to the Babylonian army.

<sup>9</sup>He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.

<sup>10</sup>Be still, and know that I *am* God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD of hosts *is* with us; the God of Jacob *is* our refuge. Selah.

**46:9**  
Isa 2:4; 9:5  
Mic 4:3  
**46:10**  
Ps 100:3  
Isa 2:11, 17

**Theme:** God is still King of the world. All nations of the earth will eventually recognize his Lordship.

**Author:** The sons of Korah (Temple assistants)

## 47 *To the chief Musician, A Psalm for the sons of Korah*

<sup>1</sup>O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph.

<sup>2</sup>For the LORD most high *is* terrible; *he is* a great King over all the earth.

<sup>3</sup>He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet.

<sup>4</sup>He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved. Selah.

<sup>5</sup>God is gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.

<sup>6</sup>Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises.

<sup>7</sup>For God *is* the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding.

<sup>8</sup>God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.

<sup>9</sup>The princes of the people are gathered together, *even* the people of the God of Abraham: for the shields of the earth *belong* unto God: he is greatly exalted.

**47:1**  
Pss 98:8-9; 106:47

**47:2**  
Deut 7:21

**47:3**  
Ps 18:47

**47:4**  
1 Pet 1:4

**47:5**  
Pss 68:18, 25, 33;  
98:6

**47:6**  
Ps 68:4

**47:8**  
1 Chr 16:31

**47:9**  
Pss 72:11; 89:18;  
97:9  
Isa 49:7, 23  
Rom 4:11-12

**48:1**  
1 Chr 16:25  
Pss 87:1; 96:4;  
145:3  
Zech 8:3

**48:2**  
Ps 50:2  
Lam 2:15  
Matt 5:35

**48:3**  
Ps 46:7

**48:4**  
2 Sam 10:6-19

**48:5**  
Exod 15:15

**48:6**  
Isa 13:8

**48:8**  
Ps 87:5

**48:9**  
Pss 26:3; 40:10

**48:10**  
Josh 7:9  
Isa 41:10  
Mal 1:11

**48:11**  
Ps 97:8

**Theme:** God's presence is our joy, security, and salvation. God is praised as the defender of Jerusalem, the holy city of the Jews. He is also our defender and guide forever.

**Author:** The sons of Korah (Temple assistants)

## 48 *A Song and Psalm for the sons of Korah*

<sup>1</sup>Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, *in* the mountain of his holiness.

<sup>2</sup>Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, *is* mount Zion, *on* the sides of the north, the city of the great King.

<sup>3</sup>God is known in her palaces for a refuge.

<sup>4</sup>For, lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together.

<sup>5</sup>They saw *it*, *and* so they marvelled; they were troubled, *and* hastened away.

<sup>6</sup>Fear took hold upon them there, *and* pain, as of a woman in travail.

<sup>7</sup>Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind.

<sup>8</sup>As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the LORD of hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it for ever. Selah.

<sup>9</sup>We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple.

<sup>10</sup>According to thy name, O God, so *is* thy praise unto the ends of the earth: thy right hand is full of righteousness.

<sup>11</sup>Let mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments.

**46:9** *in sunder:* in two. **47:2** *terrible:* awesome. **47:8** *heathen:* nations. **48:2** *for situation:* in elevation.  
**48:6** *travail:* labor.

**46:10** War and destruction are inevitable, but so is God's final victory. At that time, all will be still before Almighty God. How proper then, for us to be still now, honoring him and his power and majesty. Take time each day to be still and to exalt God.

**47:1ff** This psalm was written about the same event as Psalm 46—the Assyrian invasion of Judah by Sennacherib (2 Kings 18:13—19:37).

**47:2** The Lord God is awesome beyond words, but this didn't keep Bible writers from trying to describe him. And it shouldn't keep us from talking about him either. We can't describe God completely, but we can tell others what he has done for us. Don't let the indescribable greatness of God prevent you from telling others what you know about him.

**47:9** Abraham was the father of the Israelite nation. The one true God was sometimes called the "God of Abraham" (Exodus 3:6;

1 Kings 18:36). In a spiritual sense, God's promises to Abraham apply to all who believe in God, Jew or Gentile (Romans 4:11, 12; Galatians 3:7–9). Thus the God of Abraham is our God too.

**48:2** Why is Mount Zion—Jerusalem—"the city of the great King"? Because the Temple was located in Jerusalem, the city was seen as the center of God's presence in the world. The Bible pictures Jerusalem as the place to which believers will flock in the "last days" (Isaiah 2:2ff) and as the spiritual home of all believers, where God will live among them (Revelation 21:2, 3).

**48:8** Since Jerusalem has been destroyed several times since this psalm was written, the phrase "God will establish it for ever" may refer prophetically to the new Jerusalem, where God will judge all nations and live with all believers (Revelation 21).

**48:11** The people of Judah were from Israel's largest tribe, which settled in the southern part of Canaan where Jerusalem was

48:13  
Ps 78:5-7  
48:14  
Ps 23:4  
Isa 58:11

<sup>12</sup>Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof.  
<sup>13</sup>Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell *it* to the generation following.  
<sup>14</sup>For this God *is* our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide *even* unto death.

49:1  
Pss 33:8; 78:1

**Theme:** Trusting in worldly possessions is futile. You cannot take possessions with you when you die, and they cannot buy forgiveness from sin.

49:3  
Pss 37:30; 119:130

**Author:** The sons of Korah (Temple assistants)

49:4  
Num 12:8  
2 Kgs 3:15  
Ps 78:2

**49** *To the chief Musician, A Psalm for the sons of Korah*

49:5  
Pss 23:4; 27:1

<sup>1</sup>Hear this, all *ye* people; give ear, all *ye* inhabitants of the world:

49:6  
Ps 52:7  
Mark 10:24-25

<sup>2</sup>Both low and high, rich and poor, together.

<sup>3</sup>My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart *shall be* of understanding.

49:7  
Job 36:18

<sup>4</sup>I will incline mine ear to a parable: I will open my dark saying upon the harp.

<sup>5</sup>Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, *when* the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?

49:8  
Matt 16:26

<sup>6</sup>They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches;

49:9  
Pss 22:29; 89:48

<sup>7</sup>None *of them* can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him:

49:10  
Ps 39:6  
Luke 12:20-21

<sup>8</sup>(For the redemption of their soul *is* precious, and it ceaseth for ever:)

<sup>9</sup>That he should still live for ever, *and* not see corruption.

49:11  
Deut 3:14  
Ps 10:6

<sup>10</sup>For he seeth *that* wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others.

49:13  
Jer 17:11

<sup>11</sup>Their inward thought *is*, *that* their houses *shall continue* for ever, *and* their dwelling places to all generations; they call *their* lands after their own names.

49:14  
Ps 9:17  
Dan 7:18

<sup>12</sup>Nevertheless man *being* in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts *that* perish.

Mal 4:3  
1 Cor 6:2  
Rev 2:26

<sup>13</sup>This their way *is* their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings. Selah.

<sup>14</sup>Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling.

49:15  
Ps 16:10-11

<sup>15</sup>But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me. Selah.

49:16  
Ps 37:7

<sup>16</sup>Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased;

49:17  
Ps 17:14  
1 Tim 6:7

<sup>17</sup>For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him.

48:12 *tell*: count. 49:4 *incline*: turn. *parable*: proverb. *dark saying upon*: riddle with. 49:5 *compass*: surround. 49:8 *precious*: costly. *ceaseth for ever*: can never suffice. 49:10 *brutish*: senseless.

located (Joshua 15:1–12). David was from Judah, and he made Jerusalem his capital and center of the nation's worship. Jesus was also a member of the tribe of Judah. The psalm writer was saying that the day would come when God would bring justice to the land and his people would get the respect they deserved.

**48:12, 13** After an enemy army had unsuccessfully besieged Jerusalem, the people had to make a tour of the city, inspecting its defenses and praising God for the protection he had given. In times of great joy or after God has brought us through some great trial, we ought to inspect our defenses to make sure that the foundations—God, his Word, and the body of believers—remain strong (Ephesians 2:20–22). Then praise God for his protection!

**48:14** We often pray for God's guidance as we struggle with decisions. What we need is both guidance and a guide—a map that gives us landmarks and directions and a constant companion who has an intimate knowledge of the way and will make sure we interpret the map correctly. The Bible is such a map, and the Holy Spirit is our constant companion and guide. As you make your way through life, use both the map and your Guide.

**49:1ff** The futility of worldliness—riches, pride, fame—resounds from this psalm. Comparable in form to the book of Ecclesiastes, this psalm is one of the few written more to instruct than to praise God.

**49:7, 8, 15** In the slave market of the ancient world, a slave had to be redeemed or ransomed (someone paid the price) in order to

go free. In Mark 10:45, Ephesians 1:7, and Hebrews 9:12, we learn that Jesus paid such a price so that we could be set free from slavery to sin in order to begin living a new life with him.

There is no way for a person to buy eternal life with God. Only God can redeem a soul. If you are counting on wealth and physical comforts to keep you happy, understand that you will never have enough wealth to keep yourself from death.

**49:10–14** The rich and poor have one similarity—when they die, they leave all they own here on earth. At the moment of death (and all of us will face that moment), both rich and poor are naked and empty-handed before God. The only riches we have at that time are those we have already invested in our eternal heritage. At the time of death, each of us will wish we had invested less on earth, where we must leave it, and more in heaven, where we will retain it forever. To have treasure in heaven, we must place our faith in God, pledge ourselves to obey him, and utilize our resources for the good of his Kingdom. This is a good time to check up on your investments and see where you have invested the most. Then do whatever it takes to place your investments where they really count.

**49:12, 20** We are not like beasts in all ways, but like the animals, we all must face death. It is inevitable and we must be prepared. God will deliver us from the grave and receive us unto himself (49:15) if we trust him, and not our wealth, to save us. Psalm 73:24 also gives us confidence in the afterlife. Let us not be foolish and brutish (49:10), but respond to God's offer.



<sup>18</sup>Though while he lived he blessed his soul: and *men* will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself.

<sup>19</sup>He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light.

<sup>20</sup>Man *that is* in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts *that* perish.

**Theme:** The contrast between true and false faith. God desires sincere thanks, trust, and praise.

**Author:** Asaph, one of David's chief musicians

## 50 *A Psalm of Asaph*

<sup>1</sup>The mighty God, *even* the LORD, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.

<sup>2</sup>Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.

<sup>3</sup>Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.

<sup>4</sup>He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people.

<sup>5</sup>Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.

<sup>6</sup>And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself. Selah.

<sup>7</sup>Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I *am* God, *even* thy God.

<sup>8</sup>I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings, *to have been* continually before me.

<sup>9</sup>I will take no bullock out of thy house, *nor* he goats out of thy folds.

<sup>10</sup>For every beast of the forest *is* mine, *and* the cattle upon a thousand hills.

<sup>11</sup>I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field *are* mine.

<sup>12</sup>If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world *is* mine, and the fulness thereof.

<sup>13</sup>Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?

<sup>14</sup>Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High:

<sup>15</sup>And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

<sup>16</sup>But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or *that* thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth?

<sup>17</sup>Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee.

<sup>18</sup>When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers.

<sup>19</sup>Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit.

<sup>20</sup>Thou sittest *and* speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son.

<sup>21</sup>These *things* hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether *such an one* as thyself: *but* I will reprove thee, and set *them* in order before thine eyes.

<sup>22</sup>Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear *you* in pieces, and *there be* none to deliver.

<sup>23</sup>Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth *his* conversation *aright* will I shew the salvation of God.

**49:18** *doest well to thyself*: do well for yourself. **50:12** *the fulness thereof*: all that is in it. **50:18** *consentedst*: joined. *been partaker*: participated. **50:23** *ordereth his conversation*: orders his conduct.

**49:18**  
Ps 10:3  
Luke 12:19

**49:20**  
Ps 49:12

**50:1**  
Josh 22:22  
Ps 113:3

**50:2**  
Deut 33:2  
Pss 48:2; 80:1

**50:3**  
Ps 18:12-13  
Dan 7:10

**50:4**  
Deut 4:26; 32:1  
Isa 1:2

**50:5**  
Exod 24:7

**50:6**  
Pss 75:7; 96:13;  
97:6

**50:8**  
Ps 40:6

**50:10**  
Ps 104:24

**50:12**  
Exod 19:5

**50:13**  
Hos 6:6

**50:14**  
Deut 23:21  
Hos 14:2  
Rom 12:1  
Heb 13:15

**50:16**  
Isa 29:13

**50:17**  
Neh 9:26  
Rom 2:21-22

**50:18**  
Rom 1:32  
1 Tim 5:22

**50:19**  
Pss 10:7; 36:3

**50:20**  
Matt 10:21

**50:21**  
Ps 90:8  
Eccl 8:11  
Isa 42:14

**50:22**  
Job 8:13  
Ps 9:17

**50:23**  
Pss 85:13; 91:16

**50:1ff** God judges people for treating him lightly. First, he speaks to the superficially religious people who bring their sacrifices but are only going through the motions (50:1–15). They do not honor God with true praise and thankfulness. Second, he chides evil, hard-hearted people for their wicked words and immoral lives (50:16–22). He asks the superficially religious for genuine thanksgiving and trust, and he warns the evil people to consider their deeds, lest he destroy them in his anger.

**50:1–4** Asaph begins his psalm by describing God's final judgment of people on earth. Surprisingly, we read that God's great fury is leveled against his own people (or at least those who claim to be his). God's judgment must first begin with his own children (1 Peter 4:17).

**50:5–9** God's perfect moral nature demands that sin be judged by death; but people could offer an animal to God as a substitute for their own lives, symbolizing their faith in the merciful, forgiving God. However, the people were offering sacrifices and forgetting

their significance! The very act of sacrifice showed that they had once agreed to follow God wholeheartedly. But now their hearts were not in it. We may fall into the same pattern when we participate in "religious activities," tithing, or attend church out of habit or conformity rather than out of heartfelt love and obedience. God desires righteousness, not empty ritual. (See the note on 40:6.)

**50:16–22** Some people glibly recite God's laws, but are filled with deceit and evil. They claim his promises, but refuse to obey him. This is sin, and God will judge people for it. We, too, are hypocrites when we do not believe what we say. To let this inconsistency remain shows we are not true followers of God.

**50:21** At times God seems silent. By his silence he is not condoning sin, nor is he indifferent to it. Instead, he is withholding deserved punishment, giving time for people to repent (2 Peter 3:9). God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked and wants them to turn from evil (Ezekiel 33:11). But his silence does not last forever—a time of punishment will surely come.



51:1  
Ps 4:1  
Acts 3:19  
51:2  
Jer 33:8  
Acts 22:16  
Heb 9:13-14  
1 Jn 1:7, 9

51:3  
Isa 59:12

51:4  
Gen 20:6  
Luke 15:21  
Rom 3:4

51:5  
Ps 58:3  
Job 14:4  
Eph 2:3

51:7  
Exod 12:22  
Isa 1:18

51:9  
Jer 16:17

51:10  
Ps 78:37  
Matt 5:8  
Acts 15:9  
Eph 2:10

51:11  
Eph 4:30

51:13  
Ps 22:27

51:14  
2 Sam 12:9  
Pss 9:14; 25:5;  
71:15

51:16  
1 Sam 15:22  
Ps 40:6

51:17  
Ps 34:18

51:18  
Isa 51:3

51:19  
Pss 4:5; 66:13, 15

**Theme:** David's plea for mercy, forgiveness, and cleansing. God wants our hearts to be right with him.

**Author:** David

**51** *To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bath-sheba.*

1 Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done *this* evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, *and* be clear when thou judgest.

5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden *part* thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

8 Make me to hear joy and gladness; *that* the bones *which* thou hast broken may rejoice.

9 Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.

12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me *with thy* free spirit.

13 *Then* will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: *and* my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.

15 O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

16 For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give *it*: thou delightest not in burnt offering.

17 The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

18 Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.

19 Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.

**51:5** *shapen:* born. **51:6** *inward parts:* innermost being. *hidden part:* heart. **51:12** *thy free spirit:* a willing spirit. **51:17** *contrite:* repentant.

**51:1ff** This psalm expresses one of the clearest examples of repentance in all of Scripture. Countless broken sinners have found in these words an exquisite expression of their deeply felt need for God's mercy and forgiveness. David's confession has helped people examine excuses, half-hearted repentance, and lack of sorrow over sin that can keep them from experiencing pardon. David's words also demonstrate the place of hope within confession. Use this psalm as a starting point when dealing with a sense of distance or with guilt that is affecting your relationship with God. It will help you identify and rectify sin in your life through confession and repentance.

**51:1-7** David was truly sorry for his adultery with Bath-sheba and for murdering her husband to cover it up. He knew his actions had hurt many people. But because David repented of those sins, God mercifully forgave him. No sin is too great to be forgiven! Do you feel that you could never come close to God because you have done something terrible? God can and will forgive you of any sin. While God forgives us, however, he does not always erase the natural consequences of our sin—David's life and family were never the same as a result of his sin (see 2 Samuel 12:1-23).

**51:4** Although David sinned with Bath-sheba, he said he had sinned against God. When someone steals, murders, or slanders, it is against someone else—a victim. According to the world's standards, extramarital sex between two consenting adults is acceptable if nobody gets hurt. But people *do* get hurt—in David's case, a man was murdered and a baby died. All sin hurts us and others, but ultimately it offends God because sin in any form is a rebellion against God's way of living. When you are tempted to do wrong, remember that you will be sinning against God. That may help you avoid the danger.

**51:10** Because we are born as sinners (51:5), our natural inclination is to please ourselves rather than God. David followed that inclination when he took another man's wife. We also follow it when we sin in any way. Like David, we must ask God to cleanse us from within (51:7), filling our hearts and spirits with new thoughts and desires. Right conduct can come only from a clean heart and spirit. Ask God to create in you a clean heart and a right spirit.

**51:12** Do you ever feel stagnant in your faith, as if you are just going through the motions? Has sin driven a wedge between you and God, making him seem distant? David felt this way. He had sinned with Bath-sheba and had just been confronted by Nathan the prophet. In his prayer to God he cried, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation." God wants us to be close to him and to experience his full and complete life. But sin that remains unconfessed makes such intimacy impossible. Confess your sin to God. You may still have to face some earthly consequences as David did, but God will give back the joy of your relationship with him.

**51:13** When God forgives our sin and restores us to a relationship with him, we want to reach out to others who need this forgiveness and reconciliation. The more you have felt God's forgiveness, the more you desire to tell others about it.

**51:17** God wants a broken and contrite heart. You can never please God by outward actions—no matter how good—if your inward heart attitude is not right. Are you sorry for your sin? Do you genuinely intend to stop? God is pleased by this kind of humility.

**Theme:** God will judge the evildoer. Our anger must not block our confidence in God's ability to defeat evil.

**Author:** David

**52** *To the chief Musician, Maschil, A Psalm of David, when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and said unto him, David is come to the house of Ahimelech.*

<sup>1</sup> Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? the goodness of God *endureth* continually.

<sup>2</sup> Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.

<sup>3</sup> Thou lovest evil more than good; *and* lying rather than to speak righteousness. Selah.

<sup>4</sup> Thou lovest all devouring words, O *thou* deceitful tongue.

<sup>5</sup> God shall likewise destroy thee for ever, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of *thy* dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living. Selah.

<sup>6</sup> The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him:

<sup>7</sup> Lo, *this is* the man *that* made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, *and* strengthened himself in his wickedness.

<sup>8</sup> But *I am* like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.

<sup>9</sup> I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done *it*: and I will wait on thy name; for *it is* good before thy saints.

**52:1**  
Ps 94:4

**52:2**  
Pss 5:9; 57:4; 59:7

**52:3**  
Pss 36:4; 58:3  
Jer 9:4-5

**52:4**  
Ps 120:3

**52:5**  
Prov 2:22  
Isa 22:18-19

**52:6**  
Job 22:19  
Ps 40:3

**52:8**  
Pss 13:5; 128:3  
Jer 11:16

**52:9**  
Pss 30:12; 54:6

**Theme:** All have sinned. Because of sin, no person can find God on his own. Only God can save us.

**Author:** David

**53** *To the chief Musician upon Mahalath Maschil, A Psalm of David*

<sup>1</sup> The fool hath said in his heart, *There is* no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: *there is* none that doeth good.

<sup>2</sup> God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were *any* that did understand, that did seek God.

<sup>3</sup> Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; *there is* none that doeth good, no, not one.

<sup>4</sup> Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people *as* they eat bread: they have not called upon God.

<sup>5</sup> There were they in great fear, *where* no fear was: for God hath scattered the bones of him that encampeth *against* thee: thou hast put *them* to shame, because God hath despised them.

<sup>6</sup> Oh that the salvation of Israel *were* come out of Zion! When God bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, *and* Israel shall be glad.

**53:1-6**  
//Ps 14:1-7

**53:2**  
Ps 33:13-15

**53:3**  
Rom 3:10, 12

**53:5**  
Lev 26:17, 36  
Ps 44:7  
Jer 6:30; 8:1-2  
Ezek 6:5

**53:6**  
Ps 14:7

**Theme:** A call for God to overcome enemies. God is our helper, even in times of hurt and betrayal.

**Author:** David

**54** *To the chief Musician on Neginoth, Maschil, A Psalm of David, when the Ziphims came and said to Saul, Doth not David hide himself with us?*

<sup>1</sup> Save me, O God, by thy name, and judge me by thy strength.

<sup>2</sup> Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth.

**54:1**  
2 Chr 20:6  
Ps 20:1

**52:1** mischief: evil. **52:4** devouring: harmful. **52:5** root: uproot.

**52:1** This psalm was written about Doeg the Edomite, who had betrayed Ahimelech and David and then killed God's priests (see 1 Samuel 21:7; 22:9–23). Doeg thought that he was a great warrior—even boasting about his deed. In reality, his deed was evil, an offense to God. It is easy to mistake “accomplishment” with goodness. Just because something is done well or thoroughly doesn't mean it is good (for example, someone may be an accomplished gambler or a skillful liar). Measure all you do by the rule of God's Word, not by how proficiently you do it.

**52:8** With God by his side, David compared himself to a green olive tree sheltered in the house of God. Not only is an olive tree

one of the longest living trees, but a protected tree has even greater longevity. David was contrasting God's eternal protection of his faithful servants with the sudden destruction of the wicked (52:5–7).

**53:1** Echoing the message of Psalm 14, David proclaimed the foolishness of atheism (see also Romans 3:10). People may say there is no God in order to cover their sin, to have an excuse to continue to sin, and/or to ignore the Judge in order to avoid the judgment. A “fool” does not necessarily lack intelligence; many atheists and unbelievers are highly learned. Fools are people who reject God, the only one who can save them.

**54:3**  
1 Sam 20:1  
Pss 36:1; 40:14;  
86:14; 140:1, 4  
**54:4**  
Ps 37:24, 40  
**54:6**  
Ps 50:14  
**54:7**  
Pss 34:6; 59:10

<sup>3</sup>For strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul: they have not set God before them. Selah.

<sup>4</sup>Behold, God is mine helper: the Lord *is* with them that uphold my soul.

<sup>5</sup>He shall reward evil unto mine enemies: cut them off in thy truth.

<sup>6</sup>I will freely sacrifice unto thee: I will praise thy name, O LORD; for *it is* good.

<sup>7</sup>For he hath delivered me out of all trouble: and mine eye hath seen *his desire* upon mine enemies.

**Theme:** Expressing deep dismay over the treachery of a close friend. When friends hurt us, the burden is too difficult to carry alone.

**Author:** David

## 55 *To the chief Musician on Neginoth, Maschil, A Psalm of David*

**55:1**  
Pss 27:9; 61:1  
**55:2**  
1 Sam 1:16  
Pss 77:3; 86:6-7  
Isa 38:14  
**55:3**  
2 Sam 16:7-8  
Pss 17:9; 71:11  
**55:4**  
Ps 116:3  
**55:5**  
Job 21:6  
**55:6**  
Job 3:13  
**55:8**  
Isa 4:6  
**55:9**  
Jer 6:7  
**55:11**  
Pss 5:9; 10:7  
**55:12-13**  
Ps 41:9  
**55:14**  
Ps 42:4  
**55:15**  
Num 16:30, 33  
Ps 64:7  
**55:16**  
Ps 57:2-3  
**55:17**  
Pss 5:3; 88:13;  
141:2  
Dan 6:10  
Acts 3:1

<sup>1</sup>Give ear to my prayer, O God; and hide not thyself from my supplication.

<sup>2</sup>Attend unto me, and hear me: I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise;

<sup>3</sup>Because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked: for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me.

<sup>4</sup>My heart is sore pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me.

<sup>5</sup>Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me.

<sup>6</sup>And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! *for then* would I fly away, and be at rest.

<sup>7</sup>Lo, *then* would I wander far off, *and* remain in the wilderness. Selah.

<sup>8</sup>How would I hasten my escape from the windy storm *and* tempest.

<sup>9</sup>Destroy, O Lord, *and* divide their tongues: for I have seen violence and strife in the city.

<sup>10</sup>Day and night they go about it upon the walls thereof: mischief also and sorrow *are* in the midst of it.

<sup>11</sup>Wickedness *is* in the midst thereof: deceit and guile depart not from her streets.

<sup>12</sup>For *it was* not an enemy *that* reproached me; then I could have borne *it*: neither *was it* he that hated me *that* did magnify *himself* against me; then I would have hid myself from him:

<sup>13</sup>But *it was* thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance.

<sup>14</sup>We took sweet counsel together, *and* walked unto the house of God in company.

<sup>15</sup>Let death seize upon them, *and* let them go down quick into hell: for wickedness *is* in their dwellings, *and* among them.

<sup>16</sup>As for me, I will call upon God; and the LORD shall save me.

<sup>17</sup>Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.

**55:1** *supplication*: plea. **55:4** *sore pained*: in anguish. **55:10** *mischief also and sorrow*: wickedness and trouble. **55:12** *magnify*: exalt. **55:13** *mine acquaintance*: my close friend. **55:15** *quick*: alive.

**54:3, 4** Many of David's psalms follow the pattern found in these two verses—a transition from prayer to praise. He was not afraid to come to God and express his true feelings and needs. Because he did so, his spirit was lifted, and he could not help praising God, his helper, protector, and friend.

**55:4, 5** While God is not affected by what we think of him, we are definitely and eternally affected by what God thinks of us. This psalm begins with the bold claim that there is no God, but by this verse, the true reason for rejecting God has become clear. The reason people reject God has nothing to do with God's existence and everything to do with people's sinfulness. In our desire to do wrong, we treat God as if he doesn't exist. When God passes judgment, it will be too late to apologize and admit we were wrong. Rejection of God will turn into terror of God.

**54:5** David asked God to repay evil to his enemies. He simply stated his confidence in God's promise. Proverbs 26:27 warns that those who set a trap will get caught in it themselves. What we have intended for others may blow up in our own faces. To be honest and straightforward before God and others is simpler, easier, and safer in the long run.

**55:1ff** This psalm was most likely written during the time of Absalom's rebellion and Ahithophel's betrayal (2 Samuel 15–17). Some say verses 12–14 are messianic because they also describe Judas's betrayal of Christ (Matthew 26:14–16, 20–25).

**55:6–8** Even those who are especially close to God, as David was, have moments when they want to get away from it all and escape their problems and pressures.

**55:9–11** The city that was supposed to be holy was plagued by internal problems: violence, strife, mischief, sorrow, wickedness, deceit, guile. External enemies, though a constant threat, were not nearly as dangerous as the corruption inside. Likewise, churches may expect their troubles to come from the sinful world. Although we defend ourselves against these external pressures, we often fail to see that our own sins cause many of our troubles.

**55:12–14** Nothing hurts as much as a wound from a friend. At times friends may need to lovingly confront you in order to help you, but betrayal truly hurts. Betrayal by a friend has caused David great anguish. Real friends stick by you in times of trouble and bring healing, love, acceptance, and understanding. What kind of friend are you? Don't betray those you love.

**55:17** Praying morning, noon, and night is certainly an excellent way to maintain correct priorities throughout every day. Daniel followed this pattern (Daniel 6:10), as did Peter (Acts 10:9, 10). The prayers of God's people are effective against the overwhelming evil in the world.

<sup>18</sup>He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle *that was* against me: for there were many with me. **55:18**  
Ps 103:4

<sup>19</sup>God shall hear, and afflict them, even he that abideth of old. Selah. Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God. **55:19**  
Pss 36:1; 93:2

<sup>20</sup>He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him: he hath broken his covenant. **55:20**  
Num 30:2  
Pss 7:3-4; 89:34

<sup>21</sup>*The words* of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war *was* in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet *were* they drawn swords. **55:21**  
Pss 12:2; 28:3  
Prov 5:3-4

<sup>22</sup>Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. **55:22**  
Pss 37:5; 112:6  
1 Pet 5:7

<sup>23</sup>But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; but I will trust in thee. **55:23**  
Pss 5:6; 56:3-4;  
73:18

**Theme:** Trusting in God's care in the midst of fear. When all seems dark, one truth still shines bright: When God is for us, those against us will never succeed.

**Author:** David

**56** *To the chief Musician upon Jonath-elem-rechokim, Michtam of David, when the Philistines took him in Gath.*

<sup>1</sup>Be merciful unto me, O God: for man would swallow me up; he fighting daily oppresseth me. **56:1**  
Pss 17:9; 35:1, 25

<sup>2</sup>Mine enemies would daily swallow *me* up: for *they be* many that fight against me, O thou most High. **56:3**  
Pss 11:1; 56:10-11

<sup>3</sup>What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. **56:4**  
Ps 118:6  
Heb 13:6

<sup>4</sup>In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me. **56:5**  
Ps 41:7  
2 Pet 3:15-16

<sup>5</sup>Every day they wrest my words: all their thoughts *are* against me for evil. **56:6**  
Pss 17:11; 59:3

<sup>6</sup>They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps, when they wait for my soul. **56:7**  
Pss 36:12; 55:23

<sup>7</sup>Shall they escape by iniquity? in *thine* anger cast down the people, O God.

<sup>8</sup>Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: *are they* not in thy book? **56:8**  
Pss 39:12; 139:3  
Mal 3:16

<sup>9</sup>When I cry *unto thee*, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God *is* for me. **56:9**  
Pss 41:11; 118:6  
Rom 8:31

<sup>10</sup>In God will I praise *his* word: in the LORD will I praise *his* word.

<sup>11</sup>In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me. **56:12**  
Ps 50:14-15

<sup>12</sup>Thy vows *are* upon me, O God: I will render praises unto thee. **56:13**  
Job 33:30  
Pss 33:19; 86:13;  
116:8-9

<sup>13</sup>For thou hast delivered my soul from death: *wilt not thou deliver* my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?

**Theme:** God's faithful help and love in times of trouble. When we face trials, God will quiet our hearts and give us confidence.

**Author:** David

**57** *To the chief Musician, Al-taschith, Michtam of David, when he fled from Saul in the cave.*

<sup>1</sup>Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until *these* calamities be overpast. **57:1**  
Ruth 2:12  
Pss 36:7; 91:4  
Isa 26:20

<sup>2</sup>I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth *all things* for me. **57:2**  
Ps 138:8

<sup>3</sup>He shall send from heaven, and save me *from* the reproach of him that would swallow me up. Selah. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth. **57:3**  
Pss 18:16; 25:10;  
56:2; 144:5, 7

**55:19** have no changes: do not change. **56:3** what time: when. **56:5** wrest: twist. **56:6** mark: watch. **56:8** tellest: have taken account of. **57:1** be overpast: pass by.

**55:22** God wants to carry our burdens, but often we continue to bear them ourselves even when we say we are trusting him. Trust the same strength that sustains you to also carry your burdens.

**56:1ff** This was probably written on the same occasion as Psalm 34, when David fled from Saul to Philistine territory and had to pretend insanity before Achish when some officials grew suspicious of him (1 Samuel 21:10–15).

**56:3, 4** How much harm can people do to us? They can inflict pain, suffering, and death. But no person can rob us of our souls or our future beyond this life. How much harm can we do to ourselves? The worst thing we can do is to reject God and lose

our eternal future. Jesus said, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul" (Matthew 10:28). Instead, we should fear God, who controls this life and the next.

**56:8** Even in our deepest sorrow, God cares! Jesus reminded us further of how much God understands us—he knows even the number of hairs on our heads (Matthew 10:30). Often we waver between faith and fear. When you feel so discouraged that you are sure no one understands, remember that God knows every problem and sees every tear.

**57:1ff** This psalm was probably written about David's reflections when he was hiding in a cave from Saul (see 1 Samuel 22—24).

**57:4**  
Pss 58:6; 64:3  
Prov 30:13-14

**57:5**  
Ps 108:5

**57:6**  
Pss 10:9; 35:7;  
140:5  
Prov 26:27

**57:7-11**  
//Ps 108:1-5

**57:8**  
Pss 16:9; 30:12;  
150:3

**57:10**  
Ps 36:5

<sup>4</sup>My soul is among lions: *and* I lie *even among* them that are set on fire, *even* the sons of men, whose teeth *are* spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.

<sup>5</sup>Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; *let thy glory be* above all the earth. <sup>6</sup>They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down: they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen *themselves*. Selah.

<sup>7</sup>My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise.

<sup>8</sup>Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: *I myself* will awake early.

<sup>9</sup>I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto thee among the nations.

<sup>10</sup>For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds.

<sup>11</sup>Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: *let thy glory be* above all the earth.

**Theme:** A prayer for God's justice. When no justice can be found, rejoice in knowing that justice will triumph because there is a God who will judge with complete fairness.

**Author:** David, at a time when men in authority were twisting justice

## 58 *To the chief Musician, Al-taschith, Michtam of David*

<sup>1</sup>Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation? do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men?

<sup>2</sup>Yea, in heart ye work wickedness; ye weigh the violence of your hands in the earth.

<sup>3</sup>The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.

<sup>4</sup>Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: *they are* like the deaf adder *that* stoppeth her ear;

<sup>5</sup>Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.

<sup>6</sup>Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth: break out the great teeth of the young lions, O LORD.

<sup>7</sup>Let them melt away as waters *which* run continually: *when* he bendeth *his bow to shoot* his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces.

<sup>8</sup>As a snail *which* melteth, let *every one of them* pass away: *like* the untimely birth of a woman, *that* they may not see the sun.

<sup>9</sup>Before your pots can feel the thorns, he shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in *his* wrath.

<sup>10</sup>The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.

<sup>11</sup>So that a man shall say, Verily *there is* a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.

**57:7** fixed: steadfast. **57:8** psaltery: lyre. **58:4** the deaf adder that stoppeth: a cobra that closes its ears. **58:8** untimely birth: miscarriage. **58:11** verily: surely.

**58:1**  
Ps 82:2

**58:2**  
Ps 94:20

**58:3**  
Ps 53:3  
Isa 48:8

**58:4**  
Deut 32:33  
Pss 81:11; 140:3

**58:6**  
Job 4:10  
Ps 3:7

**58:7**  
Josh 7:5  
Pss 64:3; 112:10

**58:8**  
Job 3:16

**58:9**  
Job 27:21  
Ps 118:12  
Prov 10:25

**58:10**  
Pss 32:11; 64:10;  
68:22-23; 91:8

**58:11**  
Pss 9:8; 18:20  
Luke 6:23, 35

**57:4** At times, we may be surrounded by people who gossip about us or criticize us. Verbal cruelty can damage us as badly as physical abuse. Rather than throwing back more unacceptable talk, we, like David, can quietly talk with God about the problem.

**57:7** David's firm faith in God contrasted sharply with his enemies' loud lying and boasting. When confronted with verbal attacks, the best defense is simply to be quiet and praise God, realizing that our confidence is in his kindness, love, and faithfulness (57:10). In times of great suffering, don't turn inward to self-pity or outward to revenge, but upward to God.

**57:8** David calls out to his soul and his instruments to prepare for praise. Before a new day begins, he wants to "awake early" with his song honoring God's faithfulness. Instead of spending a sleepless night worrying about what he cannot change, he uses those wakeful hours to meditate on an expression suitable for the world. David's example shows us how to turn times of stress into times of blessing by considering God's faithfulness in comparison with our fleeting problems. Why worry when you can invest that time in praise?

**58:1ff** This is called an "imprecatory" psalm (see the note on 35:1ff). It is a cry for justice so intense that it seems, at first glance, to be a call for revenge.

**58:1ff** The Old Testament is filled with references about justice,

and it is a key topic in the psalms. Unfortunately, many judges and rulers in ancient times took justice into their own hands. They had complete authority with no accountability, and the power to make their own laws. When earth's judges are corrupt, there is little hope of justice in this life. But God loves justice, and those who obey him will experience perfect justice in eternity.

**58:6-10** Shifting from prayer to prediction, David fervently calls for justice that veers into grisly judgment. The words convey ugly pictures of the gruesome results of sin. Even uglier pictures of the darkness are often revealed by our own demands for justice and more. This is certainly not the only time David's forceful sense of justice turned back on him (see 2 Samuel 12:1-15). Ironically, David himself would eventually occupy the throne and be subject to every imprecation he called down on others. We can be grateful that God hears our prayers but we can also be grateful that God doesn't have to abide by our requests.

**58:11** Of all people, our national leaders should be just and fair. When they are unjust and unfair, people suffer as politicians wrest power from the people, the nation deteriorates, and God is ignored. When right triumphs at last, "the righteous shall rejoice" (58:10). Be assured that there will be a day of accountability, and God judges fairly. Be careful that you never side with injustice, lest you find yourself standing before an angry Judge.



**Theme:** Prayer and praise for God's saving help. God's constant love is our place of safety in a wicked world.

**Author:** David

**59** *To the chief Musician, Al-taschith, Michtam of David; when Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him.*

<sup>1</sup> Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God: defend me from them that rise up against me.

<sup>2</sup> Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men.

<sup>3</sup> For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul: the mighty are gathered against me; not *for* my transgression, nor *for* my sin, O LORD.

<sup>4</sup> They run and prepare themselves without *my* fault: awake to help me, and behold.

<sup>5</sup> Thou therefore, O LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel, awake to visit all the heathen: be not merciful to any wicked transgressors. Selah.

<sup>6</sup> They return at evening: they make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.

<sup>7</sup> Behold, they belch out with their mouth: swords *are* in their lips: for who, *say they*, doth hear?

<sup>8</sup> But thou, O LORD, shalt laugh at them; thou shalt have all the heathen in derision.

<sup>9</sup> *Because of* his strength will I wait upon thee: for God *is* my defence.

<sup>10</sup> The God of my mercy shall prevent me: God shall let me see *my desire* upon mine enemies.

<sup>11</sup> Slay them not, lest my people forget: scatter them by thy power; and bring them down, O Lord our shield.

<sup>12</sup> For the sin of their mouth *and* the words of their lips let them even be taken in their pride: and for cursing and lying *which* they speak.

<sup>13</sup> Consume *them* in wrath, consume *them*, that they *may* not *be*: and let them know that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth. Selah.

<sup>14</sup> And at evening let them return; *and* let them make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.

<sup>15</sup> Let them wander up and down for meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied.

<sup>16</sup> But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble.

<sup>17</sup> Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God *is* my defence, *and* the God of my mercy.

**59:1**  
Pss 20:1; 143:9

**59:2**  
Pss 14:4; 28:3;  
94:16; 139:19

**59:3**  
Pss 7:3-4; 56:6;  
69:4

**59:4**  
Ps 35:19, 23

**59:5**  
Pss 9:5; 84:8  
Jer 18:23

**59:7**  
Job 22:13  
Pss 10:11; 73:11;  
94:4-7

**59:8**  
Pss 2:4; 37:13

**59:9**  
Ps 9:9

**59:10**  
Ps 54:7

**59:11**  
Deut 4:9  
Pss 106:27; 144:6

**59:12**  
Ps 10:7  
Prov 12:13  
Zeph 3:11

**59:13**  
Pss 83:18; 104:35

**59:14**  
Ps 59:6

**59:16**  
Pss 21:13; 46:1;  
101:1

**59:17**  
Ps 59:9-10

**Theme:** Real help comes from God alone. When a situation seems out of control, we can trust God to do mighty things.

**Author:** David, when Israel was at war with Syria in the north, and Edom invaded Israel from the south (2 Samuel 8)

**60** *To the chief Musician upon Shushan-eduth, Michtam of David, to teach; when he strove with Aram-naharaim and with Aram-zobah, when Joab returned, and smote of Edom in the valley of salt twelve thousand.*

<sup>1</sup> O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased; O turn thyself to us again.

<sup>2</sup> Thou hast made the earth to tremble; thou hast broken it: heal the breaches thereof; for it shaketh.

**59:5** *heathen:* nations. **59:8** *have all the heathen:* hold all the nations. **59:10** *prevent:* meet.  
**59:15** *meat:* food. *grudge:* growl. **60:2** *breaches:* fractures.

**60:1**  
Pss 44:9; 79:5; 80:3

**60:2**  
2 Chr 7:14  
Ps 18:7

**59:7, 8** Vile men curse God as if he cannot hear and will not respond. But God listens patiently until that day when those curses will fall back in judgment like stones from heaven. Evil people live as if God cannot see and will not punish. But God watches patiently until that day when their deeds rise up to accuse them. As believers we must be careful not to follow the same foolish practices as evil people. We must remember that God hears and sees all we do.

**59:10** David was hunted by those whose love had turned to jealousy, and this was driving them to try to murder him. Trusted friends and even his mentor, the king, had turned against him. What changeable love! But David knew that God's love for him was *changeless*. "His mercy is everlasting" (100:5). God's mercy to all who trust him is just as permanent as his mercy to David.

When the love of others fails or disappoints us, we can rest in God's unfailing love.

**59:16** Throughout this psalm, David describes in grim detail the behavior of his enemies. He conveys his own feelings of dread with the desperation and despair that he sees in the lives of those who want to harm him. What a delight, then, in these final verses to read about God's role in David's life as refuge, a place of safety, and a source of unfailing love. David had learned to turn negative circumstances into reminders of God's faithful presence. What stresses in your life might be transformed today if you made them a starting point for praising God?

**60:1ff** This psalm gives us information about David's reign not found in the books of 1 and 2 Samuel or 1 and 2 Chronicles. Although the setting of the psalm is found in 2 Samuel 8, that passage makes no reference to the fact that David's forces met stiff



**60:3**  
Ps 66:12

**60:5-12**  
/Ps 108:6-13

**60:6**  
Gen 33:17  
Josh 17:7  
Ps 89:35

**60:7**  
Gen 49:10  
Deut 33:17  
Josh 13:31

**60:8**  
2 Sam 8:1-2, 14

**60:9**  
Ps 44:9

**60:10**  
Ps 60:1

**60:11**  
Ps 146:3

**60:12**  
Num 24:15-19  
Pss 44:5; 118:16

<sup>3</sup>Thou hast shewed thy people hard things: thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment.

<sup>4</sup>Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah.

<sup>5</sup>That thy beloved may be delivered; save *with* thy right hand, and hear me.

<sup>6</sup>God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.

<sup>7</sup>Gilead *is* mine, and Manasseh *is* mine; Ephraim also *is* the strength of mine head; Judah *is* my lawgiver;

<sup>8</sup>Moab *is* my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe: Philistia, triumph thou because of me.

<sup>9</sup>Who will bring me *into* the strong city? who will lead me into Edom?

<sup>10</sup>*Wilt* not thou, O God, *which* hadst cast us off? and *thou*, O God, *which* didst not go out with our armies?

<sup>11</sup>Give us help from trouble: for vain *is* the help of man.

<sup>12</sup>Through God we shall do valiantly: for he *it is that* shall tread down our enemies.

**Theme:** Prayer for security and assurance. Wherever we are, we can trust that God will be there to answer our cries for help.

**Author:** David, written when he was forced to escape during the days of Absalom's rebellion (2 Samuel 15—18), or after he had narrowly escaped one of Saul's efforts to kill him while hiding in the wilderness

**61:1**  
Pss 64:1; 86:6

**61:2**  
Pss 18:2; 77:3

**61:3**  
Ps 62:7  
Prov 18:10

**61:4**  
Pss 17:8; 23:6;  
27:4; 91:4

**61:5**  
Ps 56:12  
Mal 2:5; 4:2

**61:7**  
Pss 40:11; 41:12

**61:8**  
Pss 30:4; 65:1;  
71:22

## 61 *To the chief Musician upon Neginah, A Psalm of David*

<sup>1</sup>Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.

<sup>2</sup>From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock *that* is higher than I.

<sup>3</sup>For thou hast been a shelter for me, *and* a strong tower from the enemy.

<sup>4</sup>I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah.

<sup>5</sup>For thou, O God, hast heard my vows: thou hast given *me* the heritage of those that fear thy name.

<sup>6</sup>Thou wilt prolong the king's life: *and* his years as many generations.

<sup>7</sup>He shall abide before God for ever: O prepare mercy and truth, *which* may preserve him.

<sup>8</sup>So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows.

**Theme:** Placing all hope in God. Knowing that God is in control allows us to wait patiently for him to rescue us. True relief does not come when the problem is resolved, because more problems are always on the way! True relief comes from an enduring hope in God's ultimate salvation. Only then will all trials be resolved.

**Author:** David, written during the days of Absalom's rebellion (2 Samuel 15—18)

## 62 *To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun, A Psalm of David*

<sup>1</sup>Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him *cometh* my salvation.

<sup>2</sup>He only *is* my rock and my salvation; *he* *is* my defence; I shall not be greatly moved.

**60:3** of *astonishment*: that makes us stagger. **60:6** *mete*: measure. **60:7** *lawgiver*: sceptor. **60:11** *vain*: worthless. **61:4** *covert*: shelter. **61:8** *perform*: fulfill.

**62:1**  
Ps 33:20

**62:2**  
Pss 37:39; 59:17;  
89:26

resistance (60:1–3), and apparently even a temporary defeat (60:9, 10). The closer we get to God, the stronger our enemies attack us because we become a threat to their evil and selfish way of living.

**60:4, 5** God loves truth, and the people who belong to God will rally to truth like soldiers to their flag. The apostle John wrote, "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). Let the truth of God's Word stir you to action and rally you to his cause.

**60:6–10** God said the cities of Israel were his, and he knew the future of each of the nations. When the world seems out of control, we must remind ourselves that God owns the cities and knows the future of every nation. God is in control. In him we will gain the victory.

**60:8** David mentioned the enemy nations that surrounded Israel:

Moab lay directly to the east, Edom to the south, and Philistia to the west. At the time this psalm was written, David was fighting Syria to the north. Although he was surrounded by enemies, David remembered that God had promised triumph over those nations. He knew that Israel's future was closely tied to God's reputation of keeping his promises.

**61:1, 2** David must have been far from home when he wrote this psalm. Fortunately, God is not limited to any geographic location. Among unknown people and surroundings, God never changes. His presence is always with us.

**61:8** David continually praised God through both the good and difficult times of his life. Do you find something to praise God for each day? As you do, you will find your heart elevated from daily distractions to lasting confidence.

<sup>3</sup>How long will ye imagine mischief against a man? ye shall be slain all of you: as a bowing wall *shall ye be, and as a tottering fence.* **62:3**  
Isa 30:13

<sup>4</sup>They only consult to cast *him* down from his excellency: they delight in lies: they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. Selah. **62:4**  
Pss 4:2; 28:3

<sup>5</sup>My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation *is* from him. **62:7**  
Ps 46:1

<sup>6</sup>He only *is* my rock and my salvation: *he is* my defence; I shall not be moved. **62:8**  
Ps 42:4

<sup>7</sup>In God *is* my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, *and* my refuge, *is* in God. **62:8**  
Lam 2:19

<sup>8</sup>Trust in him at all times; *ye* people, pour out your heart before him: God *is* a refuge for us. Selah. **62:9**  
Isa 40:15

<sup>9</sup>Surely men of low degree *are* vanity, *and* men of high degree *are* a lie: to be laid in the balance, they *are* altogether *lighter* than vanity. **62:10**  
Ps 49:6

<sup>10</sup>Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart *upon them.* **62:10**  
Isa 61:8  
Mark 10:25  
Luke 12:15  
1 Tim 6:10

<sup>11</sup>God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power *belongeth* unto God. **62:12**  
Job 34:11

<sup>12</sup>Also unto thee, O Lord, *belongeth* mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work. **62:12**  
Matt 16:27  
<sup>†</sup>Rom 2:6

**Theme:** A desire for God's presence, provision, and protection. No matter where we are, our desire should be for God because only he satisfies fully.

**Author:** David

## 63 *A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.*

<sup>1</sup>O God, thou *art* my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; **63:1**  
Pss 42:2; 84:2

<sup>2</sup>To see thy power and thy glory, so *as* I have seen thee in the sanctuary. **63:2**  
Ps 27:4

<sup>3</sup>Because thy lovingkindness *is* better than life, my lips shall praise thee. **63:3**  
Ps 69:16

<sup>4</sup>Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name. **63:4**  
Pss 28:2; 104:33

<sup>5</sup>My soul shall be satisfied as *with* marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise *thee* with joyful lips: **63:5**  
Pss 36:8; 71:23

<sup>6</sup>When I remember thee upon my bed, *and* meditate on thee in the *night* watches. **63:6**  
Pss 4:4; 16:7; 42:8

<sup>7</sup>Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice. **63:8**  
Ps 18:35

<sup>8</sup>My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me. **63:9**  
Pss 40:14; 55:15

<sup>9</sup>But those *that* seek my soul, to destroy *it*, shall go into the lower parts of the earth. **63:11**  
Deut 6:13  
Isa 45:23

<sup>10</sup>They shall fall by the sword: they shall be a portion for foxes. **63:11**  
Deut 6:13  
Isa 45:23

<sup>11</sup>But the king shall rejoice in God; every one that sweareth by him shall glory: but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped. **63:11**  
Deut 6:13  
Isa 45:23

**62:3** *imagine mischief against:* attack. **62:4** *excellency:* high position. **62:5** *expectation:* hope. **62:9** *degree:* estate. *vanity:* breath. *to be laid in:* if weighed on. **62:10** *become not vain:* set no empty hope. **62:12** *renderest:* reward. **63:5** *marrow and fatness:* the richest of foods. **63:8** *followeth hard after:* follows close behind.

**62:3-6** Prayer can release our tensions in times of emotional stress. Trusting God to be our rock, salvation, and defense (62:2) changes our entire outlook on life. No longer are we held captive by hurtful treatment from others. We are released to follow an unchanging God.

**62:9-12** It is tempting to use honor, power, wealth, or prestige to measure people. We may even feel that such people are really getting ahead in life. But on God's scales, these people are a puff of air. What, then, can tilt the scales when God weighs us? Trusting God and working for him (62:12). Wealth, honor, power, or prestige add nothing to our value in God's eyes, but the faithful work we do for him has eternal value.

**63:1ff** Psalms 61, 62, and 63 were probably written when David was seeking refuge during Absalom's rebellion (2 Samuel 15-18). David had already lived a full life. David's quiet confidence as stated in these psalms can be seen in the account in 2 Samuel of

the events that shook his life. His actions closely paralleled his beliefs during those turbulent days.

**63:1-5** Hiding from his enemies in the barren wilderness of Judah, David was intensely lonely. He longed for a friend he could trust to ease his loneliness. No wonder he cried out, "O God, . . . my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land." If you are lonely for something lasting in your life, remember David's prayer. God alone can satisfy our deepest longings!

**63:6** During sleepless, uncomfortable nights, David thought about God. Instead of counting sheep, he meditated on his Shepherd. He reviewed all the ways God had already helped him, and he greeted the next day with songs of praise. In quiet moments or wakeful nights, make it a point to count examples of God's faithfulness to you. Doing so is far more likely to give you rest than any other items you might count!

**64:1ff** Evil can come in the form of a secret conspiracy or an ambush because Satan wants to catch us unprepared. He tempts us in our weakest areas when we least expect it. But God himself will strike down our enemies (64:7), whether they be physical or spiritual. Wickedness is widespread and affects us in many ways, but the final victory already belongs to God and those who trust and believe in him.

**Theme:** A complaint against conspiracy. When others conspire against us, we can ask God for protection because he knows everything.

**Author:** David

## 64 *To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David*

- 64:2**  
Pss 56:6; 59:2
- 64:3**  
Ps 140:3
- 64:4**  
Pss 10:8; 11:2
- 64:5**  
Ps 140:5
- 64:7**  
Ps 7:12-13
- 64:8**  
Ps 9:3  
Prov 18:6-7
- 64:10**  
Pss 11:1; 25:20;  
32:11
- 1 Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer: preserve my life from fear of the enemy.
- 2 Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity:
- 3 Who whet their tongue like a sword, *and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words:*
- 4 That they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.
- 5 They encourage themselves *in an evil matter:* they commune of laying snares privily; they say, *Who shall see them?*
- 6 They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward *thought* of every one *of them*, and the heart, *is deep.*
- 7 But God shall shoot at them *with an arrow;* suddenly shall they be wounded.
- 8 So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away.
- 9 And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his doing.
- 10 The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory.

**Theme:** God provides abundantly. We can be thankful to God for his many blessings.

**Author:** David

## 65 *To the chief Musician, A Psalm and Song of David*

- 65:1**  
Pss 86:9; 116:18
- 65:2**  
Isa 66:23
- 65:3**  
Ps 40:12  
Heb 9:14
- 65:4**  
Pss 4:3; 33:12; 36:8
- 65:5**  
Pss 45:4; 48:10
- 65:6**  
Pss 93:1; 95:4
- 65:7**  
Ps 89:9  
Isa 17:12-13  
Matt 8:26
- 65:8**  
Ps 139:9-10
- 1 Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Zion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed.
- 2 O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.
- 3 Iniquities prevail against me: *as for our transgressions,* thou shalt purge them away.
- 4 Blessed is *the man whom* thou choosest, and causest to approach *unto thee,* that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, *even of thy holy temple.*
- 5 *By* terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation; *who art* the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off *upon the sea:*
- 6 Which by his strength setteth fast the mountains; *being girded with power:*
- 7 Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people.
- 8 They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens: thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice.
- 64:2** *insurrection:* conspiracy. **64:3** *whet:* sharpen. **64:4** *perfect:* blameless. **64:5** *commune:* talk, *privily:* secretly. **64:8** *fall upon:* turn against. **64:9** *of his doing:* what he has done. **65:1** *Sion:* Zion. **65:5** *terrible:* awesome. **65:6** *setteth fast:* formed. *girded:* armed. **65:8** *tokens:* signs. *outgoings of the morning and evening:* dawn and sunset.

**64:1, 2** We may believe that God wants to hear only certain requests from us. While it is true that we should offer praise, confession, and respectful petitions, it is true also that God is willing to listen to *anything* we want to tell him. David expressed himself honestly, knowing God would hear his voice. God will always listen attentively and will fully understand us.

**65:1, 2** In Old Testament times, vows were taken seriously and fulfilled completely. No one had to make a vow, but once made, it was binding (Deuteronomy 23:21–23). The vows mentioned here involved promises to praise God for his answers to prayer.

**65:3** Although sins fill our hearts, God will forgive them all if we ask sincerely. Do you feel as though God could never forgive you, that your sins are too many, or that some of them are too great? The good news is that God can and will forgive them all. Nobody is beyond redemption, and nobody is so full of sin that he or she cannot be made clean.

**65:4** Access to God, the joy of living in the Tabernacle courts, was a great honor. God had chosen a special group of Israelites, the tribe of Levi, to serve as ministers in the Tabernacle (Numbers 3:5–51). They were the only ones who could enter the sacred rooms where God's presence resided. Because of Jesus' death on the cross, all believers today have personal access to God's presence everywhere and anytime. We gain this access into God's presence by believing in the death and resurrection of Christ, and turning from our sins to God's way of living.

**65:6–13** This harvest psalm glorifies God the Creator as reflected in the beauty of nature. Nature helps us understand something of God's character. The Jews believed that God's care of nature was a sign of his love and provision for them. Nature shows God's generosity—giving us more than we need or deserve. Reflecting on such abundant generosity should produce grateful and generous hearts in us.

<sup>9</sup>Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, *which* is full of water: thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it. **65:9**  
Ps 104:13-14, 24

<sup>10</sup>Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof: thou makest it soft with showers: thou blessest the springing thereof.

<sup>11</sup>Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness.

<sup>12</sup>They drop *upon* the pastures of the wilderness: and the little hills rejoice on every side. **65:12**  
Job 38:26-27

<sup>13</sup>The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing. **65:13**  
Pss 98:8; 144:13  
Isa 30:23; 55:12

**Theme:** God answers prayer. Individually and as a body of believers, we should praise and worship God.

**Author:** Anonymous, written after a great victory in battle

## 66 *To the chief Musician, A Song or Psalm*

<sup>1</sup>Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands:

<sup>2</sup>Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious.

<sup>3</sup>Say unto God, How terrible *art thou* in thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee. **66:3**  
Pss 18:44; 47:2

<sup>4</sup>All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing *to* thy name. Selah.

<sup>5</sup>Come and see the works of God: *he is* terrible *in his* doing toward the children of men.

<sup>6</sup>He turned the sea into dry *land*: they went through the flood on foot: there did we rejoice in him. **66:4**  
Pss 22:27; 67:4

<sup>7</sup>He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah. **66:5**  
Ps 46:8

<sup>8</sup>O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard:

<sup>9</sup>Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved.

<sup>10</sup>For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried.

<sup>11</sup>Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins.

<sup>12</sup>Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy *place*. **66:6**  
Exod 14:21  
Ps 105:43

<sup>13</sup>I will go into thy house with burnt offerings: I will pay thee my vows,

<sup>14</sup>Which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble.

<sup>15</sup>I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams; I will offer bullocks with goats. Selah. **66:7**  
Pss 11:4; 140:8;  
145:13

<sup>16</sup>Come *and* hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.

<sup>17</sup>I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue.

<sup>18</sup>If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear *me*:

<sup>19</sup>But verily God hath heard *me*; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.

<sup>20</sup>Blessed *be* God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me. **66:8**  
Ps 30:3

**66:9** *corn*: grain. **65:11** *drop fatness*: drip with abundance. **66:3** *terrible*: awesome. **66:5** *doing*: deeds. **66:9** *suffereth*: allows. **66:10** *proved*: tested. *tried*: refined. **66:11** *loins*: backs. **66:12** *wealthy place*: place of abundance. **66:15** *fatlings*: fat animals. **66:17** *extolled*: praised. **66:18** *regard*: cherish. **66:19** *verily*: surely. **66:10**  
Ps 17:3  
Zech 13:9  
1 Pet 1:6-7

**66:5-7** The writer was remembering God's rescue of the Israelites by parting the Red Sea during the Exodus. God saved the Israelites then, and he continues to save his people today.

**66:10-12** Just as fire refines silver in the smelting process, trials refine our character. They bring a new and deeper wisdom to our lives, helping us discern truth from falsehood and equipping us with the discipline to carry out what we know is right. Above all, these trials help us realize that life is a gift from God to be cherished, not a right to be taken for granted.

**66:13-15** People sometimes make bargains with God, saying, "If you heal me [or get me out of this mess], I'll obey you for the rest of my life." However, soon after they recover, the vow is forgotten and the old lifestyle resumes. This writer made a promise to God, but he remembered the promise and was

prepared to fulfill his vow. God always keeps his promises and wants us to follow his example. Be careful to follow through on whatever you promise to do.

**66:16-20** The writer cried to God for help, offering praise while confessing his sins. Confession acknowledges our sin, praise acknowledges God's gracious forgiveness, and crying out to God in prayer acknowledges that we trust God to forgive our sins. No believer's life is complete without daily confession, praise, and prayer.

**66:18** We must continually confess our sins because we continue to do wrong. But confession can only be true if we listen to God and want to stop doing what is wrong. David confessed his sin and prayed, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins" (19:12, 13). If we *refuse* to repent, if we harbor and cherish certain sins, then we are placing a wall between us and God. We may not be able to remember *every* sin we have ever committed, but our attitude toward life should be one of confession and obedience.

**67:1**  
Num 6:25  
Pss 4:6; 80:3, 7, 19

**67:2**  
Acts 18:25  
Titus 2:11

**67:3**  
Ps 66:4

**67:4**  
Ps 96:10, 13

**67:5**  
Ps 22:27

**67:6**  
Lev 26:4  
Ezek 34:27

**67:7**  
Ps 33:8

**Theme:** Joy comes from spreading the news about God around the world.

**Author:** Anonymous, probably written for one of the harvest festivals

## 67 *To the chief Musician on Neginoth, A Psalm or Song*

<sup>1</sup> God be merciful unto us, and bless us; *and* cause his face to shine upon us; Selah.

<sup>2</sup> That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.

<sup>3</sup> Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.

<sup>4</sup> O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Selah.

<sup>5</sup> Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.

<sup>6</sup> *Then* shall the earth yield her increase; *and* God, *even* our own God, shall bless us.

<sup>7</sup> God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.

**Theme:** Remembering God's glory and power. Times and cultures change, but God is always majestically present as protector and provider.

**Author:** David

## 68 *To the chief Musician, A Psalm or Song of David*

<sup>1</sup> Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him.

<sup>2</sup> As smoke is driven away, *so* drive *them* away: as wax melteth before the fire, *so* let the wicked perish at the presence of God.

<sup>3</sup> But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.

<sup>4</sup> Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him.

<sup>5</sup> A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, *is* God in his holy habitation.

<sup>6</sup> God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry *land*.

<sup>7</sup> O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness; Selah:

<sup>8</sup> The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: *even* Sinai itself *was* *moved* at the presence of God, the God of Israel.

<sup>9</sup> Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary.

<sup>10</sup> Thy congregation hath dwelt therein: thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor.

<sup>11</sup> The Lord gave the word: *great* *was* the company of those that published it.

<sup>12</sup> Kings of armies did flee apace: and she that tarried at home divided the spoil.

**67:2** *saving health:* salvation. **68:4** *JAH:* LORD. **68:5** *habitation:* dwelling. **68:6** *solitary:* lonely. **68:9** *confirm:* refresh. **68:11** *published:* proclaimed. **68:12** *apace:* hastily, *tarried:* remained.

**67:2** Could the psalm writer have looked across the years to see the Gospel go throughout the earth? This psalm surely speaks of the fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18–20), when Jesus commanded that the Gospel be taken to all nations. Count yourself among that great crowd of believers worldwide who know the Savior, praise him for his Good News, and share that Gospel until there is an abundant harvest.

**67:7** Every verse in this psalm mentions God's relationship with the entire globe. The intended audience of this message spans the world. God repeatedly spoke to and through his people about his love for all nations. Read this psalm with the realization that it was written for and about you!

**68:1ff** This psalm begins just like Moses' cry in Numbers 10:35 as the Israelites followed the Ark of the Covenant. Perhaps it was written when David led a joyous procession that brought the Ark from the house of Obed-edom to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6:11–15).

**68:3–6** With shouts of praise and the sound of trumpets, David and his people took the holy Ark toward Mount Zion (2 Samuel

6:15). It was a time to sing praises to the Lord, whose presence brings great joy. Only in him is there hope for the orphans, widows, prisoners, and all other lonely people. If you are among the ranks of the lonely or disadvantaged, join David in praise and discover great joy as you invite him to be with you.

**68:4–6** David praised God for his protection and provision. When we see God's true majesty, our response should be to praise him. This was a song of faith, since many of these benefits had not yet come true in David's time. It should also be our song of faith. We must continue to trust God because, in time, he will fulfill all his promises.

**68:8** Mount Sinai, also called Mount Horeb, had a prominent role in Israelite history. It was at Mount Sinai that God met Moses and commissioned him to lead Israel out of Egypt (Exodus 3:1–10). It was to Mount Sinai that the nation of Israel returned and received God's laws (Exodus 19:1–3), and God's presence made the entire mountain quake (Exodus 19:18). This sacred mountain served to remind the people of God's words and promises.



- <sup>13</sup>Though ye have lien among the pots, *yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.* **68:13**  
Gen 49:14
- <sup>14</sup>When the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was *white* as snow in Salmon. **68:14**  
Josh 10:10
- <sup>15</sup>The hill of God *is as* the hill of Bashan; an high hill *as* the hill of Bashan. **68:15**  
Ps 36:6
- <sup>16</sup>Why leap ye, ye high hills? *this is* the hill *which* God desireth to dwell in; yea, the LORD will dwell *in it* for ever. **68:16**
- <sup>17</sup>The chariots of God *are* twenty thousand, *even* thousands of angels: the Lord *is* among them, *as in* Sinai, in the holy *place*. **68:17**  
Deut 33:2  
Dan 7:10
- <sup>18</sup>Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, *for* the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell *among them*. **68:18**  
<sup>1</sup>Eph 4:8
- <sup>19</sup>Blessed *be* the Lord, *who* daily loadeth us *with benefits*, *even* the God of our salvation. **68:19**  
Pss 55:22; 65:5  
Isa 46:4
- Selah. **68:20**  
Ps 56:13
- <sup>20</sup>*He that is* our God *is* the God of salvation; and unto GOD the Lord *belong* the issues from death. **68:20**
- <sup>21</sup>But God shall wound the head of his enemies, *and* the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses. **68:21**  
Ps 110:6  
Hab 3:13
- <sup>22</sup>The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring *my people* again from the depths of the sea: **68:22**  
Amos 9:1-3
- <sup>23</sup>That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of *thine* enemies, *and* the tongue of thy dogs in the same. **68:23**  
1 Kgs 21:19  
Ps 58:10  
Jer 15:3
- <sup>24</sup>They have seen thy goings, O God; *even* the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary. **68:24**  
Ps 63:2
- <sup>25</sup>The singers went before, the players on instruments *followed* after; among *them were* the damsels playing with timbrels. **68:25**  
Exod 15:20  
Judg 11:34  
1 Chr 13:8
- <sup>26</sup>Bless ye God in the congregations, *even* the Lord, from the fountain of Israel. **68:26**  
Deut 33:28  
Pss 22:22-23; 26:12
- <sup>27</sup>There *is* little Benjamin *with* their ruler, the princes of Judah *and* their council, the princes of Zebulun, *and* the princes of Naphtali. **68:27**
- <sup>28</sup>Thy God hath commanded thy strength: strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us. **68:28**  
Pss 29:11; 44:4
- <sup>29</sup>Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee. **68:29**  
Ps 72:10
- <sup>30</sup>Rebuke the company of spearmen, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people, *till every one* submit himself with pieces of silver: scatter thou the people *that* delight in war. **68:30**  
Ps 89:10
- <sup>31</sup>Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God. **68:31**  
Isa 19:19-21; 45:14
- <sup>32</sup>Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord; Selah: **68:32**  
Ps 102:21-22
- <sup>33</sup>To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, *which were* of old; lo, he doth send out his voice, *and that* a mighty voice. **68:33**  
Pss 18:10; 29:4
- <sup>34</sup>Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency *is* over Israel, and his strength *is* in the clouds. **68:34**
- <sup>35</sup>O God, *thou art* terrible out of thy holy places: the God of Israel *is* he that giveth strength and power unto *his* people. Blessed *be* God. **68:35**  
Deut 10:17  
Pss 29:11; 47:2

**68:13** have lien: stay, pots: sheepfolds. **68:19** loadeth us with benefits: bears our burdens. **68:20** the issues: escapes. **68:24** goings: procession. **68:25** timbrels: tambourines. **68:28** wrought: done. **68:33** doth send out: speaks out with. **68:34** excellency: majesty. **68:35** terrible out of: awesome in. places: sanctuary.

**68:13** The dove is a symbol of God's beloved Israel, who is so protected and blessed that it has taken silver and gold from its enemies, even though it didn't attack them.

**68:15, 16** Bashan, the land northeast of Israel, was the home of mighty mountains, including Mount Hermon, the tallest and most awesome mountain in the region. God's choice of Mount Zion, a foothill by comparison, for the site of the Temple led the psalm writer to poetically describe the envy of the mountains of Bashan.

**68:17** This psalm celebrates the final stages of a journey which began at Mount Sinai with the construction of the Ark of the Covenant and finally ended appropriately at Mount Zion (site of the Holy Place), the chosen dwelling place of God among his people.

It probably describes the moving of the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem.

**68:18** This verse is quoted in Ephesians 4:8 and applied to the ministry of the ascended Christ. It celebrates his victory over evil. It assures all of us who believe in Christ that by trusting him, we can overcome evil.

**68:19-21** God frees his people and crushes his enemies. Salvation is freedom from sin and death. Those who refuse to turn to God will be crushed by sin and death. They will be trapped by the sin they loved and destroyed by the death they feared. How much better it is for those who love God and fear the consequences of sin.

**68:34, 35** When we consider all God has done for us, we should feel an overwhelming sense of awe as we kneel before the Lord in his sanctuary. Nature surrounds us with countless signs of his wonderful power. His unlimited power and unspeakable majesty leave us breathless in his presence. How fortunate we are that he cares for us.



**Theme:** A cry of distress in a sea of trouble. We may have to suffer severely for our devotion to God, but that should cause us to look forward with joy to the day when evil and injustice will be gone forever.

**Author:** David

## 69 *To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim, A Psalm of David*

<sup>1</sup> Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto *my* soul.

<sup>2</sup> I sink in deep mire, where *there is* no standing; I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.

<sup>3</sup> I am weary of my crying; my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God.

<sup>4</sup> They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, *being* mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored *that* which I took not away.

<sup>5</sup> O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee.

<sup>6</sup> Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for my sake: let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel.

<sup>7</sup> Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face.

<sup>8</sup> I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children.

<sup>9</sup> For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.

<sup>10</sup> When I wept, *and chastened* my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach.

<sup>11</sup> I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb to them.

<sup>12</sup> They that sit in the gate speak against me; and I *was* the song of the drunkards.

<sup>13</sup> But as for me, my prayer *is* unto thee, O Lord, *in* an acceptable time: O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation.

<sup>14</sup> Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink: let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters.

<sup>15</sup> Let not the waterflood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.

<sup>16</sup> Hear me, O Lord; for thy lovingkindness *is* good: turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies.

<sup>17</sup> And hide not thy face from thy servant; for I am in trouble: hear me speedily.

<sup>18</sup> Draw nigh unto my soul, *and* redeem it: deliver me because of mine enemies.

<sup>19</sup> Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour: mine adversaries *are* all before thee.

<sup>20</sup> Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked *for some* to take pity, but *there was* none; and for comforters, but I found none.

<sup>21</sup> They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

<sup>22</sup> Let their table become a snare before them: and *that which should have been for their* welfare, *let it become* a trap.

<sup>23</sup> Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake.

<sup>24</sup> Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them.

<sup>25</sup> Let their habitation be desolate; *and* let none dwell in their tents.

<sup>26</sup> For they persecute *him* whom thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded.

**69:9** *eaten me up:* consumed me. **69:11** *proverb:* byword. **69:21** *meat:* food. **69:23** *loins:* backs. **69:25** *habitation:* homes. **69:26** *smitten:* struck.

**69:2**  
Jon 2:3

**69:3**  
Pss 6:6;  
119:82, 123  
Isa 38:14

**69:4**  
Pss 35:11; 59:3  
†John 15:25

**69:5**  
Ps 44:21

**69:6**  
2 Sam 12:14

**69:8**  
Pss 31:11; 38:11

**69:9**  
†John 2:17  
†Rom 15:3

**69:12**  
Job 30:9

**69:13**  
Ps 32:6  
Isa 49:8  
2 Cor 6:2

**69:14**  
Ps 144:7

**69:15**  
Num 16:33  
Ps 124:4-5

**69:16**  
Pss 25:16; 51:1;  
63:3

**69:18**  
Pss 49:15; 119:134

**69:19**  
Ps 22:6-7  
Isa 53:3

**69:21**  
†Matt 27:48  
†John 19:29

**69:23**  
†Rom 11:9-10

**69:25**  
Matt 23:38  
Luke 13:35  
†Acts 1:20

**69:26**  
2 Chr 28:9  
Isa 53:4

**69:1ff** This is one of the most quoted psalms in the New Testament, and it is often applied to the ministry and suffering of Jesus. Verse 4, like John 15:25, speaks of Jesus' many enemies. The experience of being mocked by his brothers (69:8) is expressed in John 7:5. Verse 9 portrays David's zeal for God; Christ showed great zeal when he threw the money changers out of the Temple (John 2:14-17). Paul quoted part of 69:9 in Romans 15:3. Christ's great suffering is portrayed in 69:20, 21 (Matthew 27:48; Mark 15:23; Luke 23:36; John 19:28-30). Verses 22 through 28 are quoted in Romans 11:9, 10; and Peter applied 69:25 to Judas (Acts 1:20).

**69:3** David wept until he was physically exhausted, with a dry throat and blurred vision. He wept until he could weep no more,

yet he still trusted God to save him. When devastated by death or tragedy, we need not collapse or despair because we can turn to God and ask him to save us and help us. The tears will still come, but we will not be crying in vain.

**69:13** What problems David faced! He was scoffed at, mocked, insulted, humiliated, and made the object of citywide gossip. But still he prayed. When we are completely beaten down, we are tempted to turn from God, give up, and quit trusting him. When your situation seems hopeless, determine that no matter how bad things become you will continue to pray. God will hear your prayer, and he will rescue you. When others reject us, we need God most. Don't turn from your most faithful friend.

27 Add iniquity unto their iniquity: and let them not come into thy righteousness.

28 Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.

29 But I *am* poor and sorrowful: let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high.

30 I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving.

31 This also shall please the LORD better than an ox *or* bullock that hath horns and hoofs.

32 The humble shall see *this, and* be glad: and your heart shall live that seek God.

33 For the LORD heareth the poor, and despiseth not his prisoners.

34 Let the heaven and earth praise him, the seas, and every thing that moveth therein.

35 For God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah: that they may dwell there, and have it in possession.

36 The seed also of his servants shall inherit it: and they that love his name shall dwell therein.

69:28

Exod 32:32-33

Luke 10:20

Rev 3:5; 13:8; 20:15

69:30

Pss 28:7; 50:14-15

69:31

Ps 50:13-14

69:32

Pss 22:26; 34:2

69:34

Ps 148:1-13

69:35

Ps 147:2

Isa 44:26

69:36

Ps 25:13

**Theme:** An urgent prayer for help. It can be your prayer when you're short on time and long on need.

**Author:** David

**70** *To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, to bring to remembrance*

1 *Make haste*, O God, to deliver me; make haste to help me, O LORD.

2 Let them be ashamed and confounded that seek after my soul: let them be turned backward, and put to confusion, that desire my hurt.

3 Let them be turned back for a reward of their shame that say, Aha, aha.

4 Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: and let such as love thy salvation say continually, Let God be magnified.

5 But I *am* poor and needy: make haste unto me, O God: thou *art* my help and my deliverer; O LORD, make no tarrying.

**Theme:** God's constant help—from childhood to old age. Our lives are a testimony of what God has done for us.

**Author:** Anonymous

**71** 1 In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion.

2 Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape: incline thine ear unto me, and save me.

3 Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me; for thou *art* my rock and my fortress.

4 Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.

5 For thou *art* my hope, O Lord God: *thou art* my trust from my youth.

6 By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels: my praise *shall be* continually of thee.

7 I am as a wonder unto many; but thou *art* my strong refuge.

8 Let my mouth be filled *with* thy praise *and with* thy honour all the day.

9 Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth.

10 For mine enemies speak against me; and they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together,

69:30 *magnify*: glorify. 70:4 *magnified*: exalted. 70:5 *make no tarrying*: do not delay. 71:2 *incline*: turn. 71:3 *habitation*: refuge. 71:6 *holden up from the womb*: upheld from birth. *bowels*: womb.

70:1-5

//Ps 40:13-17

70:2

Ps 35:4, 26

71:1

Pss 25:2-3; 31:1-3

71:2

Pss 17:6; 31:1

71:3

Deut 33:27

Ps 18:2

71:5

Ps 22:9-11

Jer 17:7, 17

71:6

Pss 22:9-10; 34:1

Isa 46:3

71:7

Ps 61:3

71:9

Ps 92:14

71:10

Matt 27:1

**69:28** The "book of the living" is God's list of those who are in right relationship with him and who remain faithful (1:3; 7:9; 11:7; 34:12; 37:17, 29; 55:22; 75:10; 92:12-14; 140:13). This term in the New Testament refers to those who will receive eternal life (see Philippians 4:3; Revelation 3:5; 13:8; 20:15).

**70:1-5** When others disappoint and threaten us, we feel empty, as though a vital part of ourselves has been stolen. When others break the trust we have placed in them, they break our spirits as well. At those empty, broken moments, we must join the psalm writer in begging God to rush to our aid. He alone can fill our lives with his joy (70:4). With the writer we cry out, "O LORD, make no tarrying."

**70:4** This short psalm (similar in content to 40:13-17) was David's plea for God to rush to his aid. Yet even in his moment of panic, he did not forget praise. Praise is important because it helps us remember who God is. Often our prayers are filled with requests for ourselves and others, and we forget to thank God for what he has done and to worship him for who he is. Don't take God for granted and treat him as a vending machine. Even when he was afraid, David praised God.

**71:1ff** The writer was old and saw his life as a testimony of all God had done for him (71:7, 18). Remembering God's lifetime of blessing will help us to see the consistency of his grace throughout the years, to trust him for the future, and to share with others the benefits of following him.

**71:11**  
Pss 3:2; 7:2

**71:12**  
Ps 22:9-11

**71:13**  
Ps 35:4, 26

**71:15**  
Pss 35:28; 40:5

**71:16**  
Ps 106:2

**71:18**  
Pss 22:31; 78:4, 6

**71:19**  
Deut 3:24  
Pss 35:10; 57:10  
Luke 1:49

**71:20**  
Pss 23:4; 60:3-4;  
119:25  
Hos 6:2

**71:22**  
Pss 33:2; 89:18;  
147:7

**71:23**  
Pss 5:11; 103:4

**71:24**  
Pss 35:28; 71:13

**72:1**  
1 Kgs 3:9

**72:2**  
Ps 82:3  
Isa 9:7; 11:2-5

**72:3**  
Isa 9:5-6  
Mic 4:3-4  
Zech 9:10

**72:4**  
Isa 11:4

**72:5**  
Ps 89:36-37

**72:6**  
Deut 32:2  
Ps 65:10  
Hos 6:3

**72:7**  
Ps 92:12

**72:8**  
Exod 23:31  
Zech 9:10

**72:9**  
Isa 49:23  
Mic 7:17

**72:10**  
Pss 45:12; 68:29  
Isa 42:4, 10; 60:6

**72:11**  
Pss 86:9; 138:4  
Isa 49:23

<sup>11</sup>Saying, God hath forsaken him: persecute and take him; for *there is none to deliver him.*

<sup>12</sup>O God, be not far from me: O my God, make haste for my help.

<sup>13</sup>Let them be confounded *and* consumed that are adversaries to my soul; let them be covered *with* reproach and dishonour that seek my hurt.

<sup>14</sup>But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more.

<sup>15</sup>My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness *and* thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers *thereof*.

<sup>16</sup>I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD: I will make mention of thy righteousness, *even* of thine only.

<sup>17</sup>O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.

<sup>18</sup>Now also when I am old and greyheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto *this* generation, *and* thy power to every one *that* is to come.

<sup>19</sup>Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who *is* like unto thee!

<sup>20</sup>Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth.

<sup>21</sup>Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.

<sup>22</sup>I will also praise thee with the psaltery, *even* thy truth, O my God: unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel.

<sup>23</sup>My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee; and my soul, which thou hast redeemed.

<sup>24</sup>My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long: for they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.

**Theme:** The perfect King. In this psalm, a king asks God to help his son rule the nation justly and wisely. It looks forward to the endless reign of the Messiah, who alone can rule with perfect justice and whose citizens will enjoy perfect peace.

**Author:** Solomon

## 72 A Psalm for Solomon

<sup>1</sup>Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son.

<sup>2</sup>He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment.

<sup>3</sup>The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness.

<sup>4</sup>He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.

<sup>5</sup>They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations.

<sup>6</sup>He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers *that* water the earth.

<sup>7</sup>In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.

<sup>8</sup>He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.

<sup>9</sup>They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust.

<sup>10</sup>The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.

<sup>11</sup>Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.

**71:15** *the numbers thereof:* its measure. **71:20** *sore:* severe. *quicken:* revive. **71:22** *psaltery:* lyre. **72:2** *judgment:* justice.

**71:14** As we face the sunset years, we recognize that God has been our constant help in the past. As physical powers wane, we need God even more, and we realize he is still our constant help. We must never despair, but keep on expecting his help no matter how severe our limitations. Hope in him helps us to keep going, to keep serving him.

**71:18** A person is never too old to serve God, never too old to pray. Though age may stop us from certain physical activities, it need not stifle our desire or limit our opportunities to tell others (especially children) about all we have seen God do in the many years we've lived.

**72:1, 2** What qualities do we want most in our leaders? God desires all who rule under him to be righteous and just. As you think of world leaders today, think how the world would change if they would commit themselves to these two qualities. Pray for leaders as you hear about them in the news. Ask God to help them see their need for him; ask God to help them lead with justice and righteousness (see 1 Timothy 2:1, 2).

<sup>12</sup>For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and *him* that hath no helper.

<sup>13</sup>He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy.

<sup>14</sup>He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight.

<sup>15</sup>And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him continually; *and* daily shall he be praised.

<sup>16</sup>There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and *they* of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.

<sup>17</sup>His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and *men* shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.

<sup>18</sup>Blessed *be* the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things.

<sup>19</sup>And blessed *be* his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled *with* his glory; Amen, and Amen.

<sup>20</sup>The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.

**72:12**  
Job 29:12

**72:14**  
Ps 116:15

**72:15**  
Isa 60:6

**72:16**  
Job 5:25

**72:17**  
Gen 12:3; 22:18  
Ps 89:36

**72:18**  
Exod 15:11  
Pss 41:13; 77:14

**72:19**  
Num 14:20-21  
Neh 9:5

### C. THE THIRD BOOK OF PSALMS (73:1—89:52)

These psalms celebrate the sovereignty of God, God's hand in history, God's faithfulness, and God's covenant with David. These psalms remind us that our worship of the almighty God should be continual.

**Theme:** The temporary prosperity of the wicked and the lasting rewards of the righteous. We should live holy lives and trust God for our future rewards.

**Author:** Asaph, a leader of one of the Temple choirs (see 1 Chronicles 25:1)

## 73 *A Psalm of Asaph*

<sup>1</sup>Truly God *is* good to Israel, *even* to such as are of a clean heart.

<sup>2</sup>But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.

<sup>3</sup>For I was envious at the foolish, *when* I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

<sup>4</sup>For *there are* no bands in their death: but their strength *is* firm.

<sup>5</sup>*They are* not in trouble *as other* men; neither are they plagued like *other* men.

<sup>6</sup>Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them *as* a garment.

<sup>7</sup>Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.

<sup>8</sup>They are corrupt, and speak wickedly *concerning* oppression: they speak loftily.

<sup>9</sup>They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.

<sup>10</sup>Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full *cup* are wrung out to them.

<sup>11</sup>And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High?

<sup>12</sup>Behold, these *are* the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase *in* riches.

<sup>13</sup>Verily I have cleansed my heart *in* vain, and washed my hands in innocence.

<sup>14</sup>For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.

<sup>15</sup>If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend *against* the generation of thy children.

<sup>16</sup>When I thought to know this, it *was* too painful for me;

<sup>17</sup>Until I went into the sanctuary of God; *then* understood I their end.

**73:1**  
Pss 24:3-4; 51:10  
Matt 5:8

**73:2**  
Ps 94:18

**73:3**  
Ps 37:1, 7  
Jer 12:1

**73:5**  
Job 21:9-10

**73:6**  
Ps 109:18

**73:7**  
Job 15:27-28  
Ps 17:10

**73:8**  
Pss 1:1; 17:10  
Jude 1:16

**73:11**  
Job 22:13

**73:12**  
Ps 49:6

**73:13**  
Job 21:15; 34:9  
Ps 26:6

**73:14**  
Pss 38:5-6; 118:18

**73:16**  
Eccl 8:16-17

**73:17**  
Ps 27:4

**72:16** *corn*: grain. **73:2** *well nigh*: almost. **73:4** *bands*: pains. **73:6** *compasseth them about as a chain*: is their necklace. **73:7** *stand out with fatness*: bulge with abundance. **73:13** *verily*: surely.

**72:12-14** God cares for the helpless and poor because they are precious to him. If God feels so strongly about the needy and loves them so deeply, how can we ignore their plight? Examine what you are doing to reach out with God's love to the poor, weak, and needy. Are you ignoring their plight or are you helping to meet their needs?

**72:17** Solomon, David's son, reigned in Israel's golden age. He built the magnificent Temple, and the land rested in peace. This psalm, though written by Solomon, looks beyond Solomon's reign to that of Jesus the Messiah, whose Kingdom extends "unto the ends of the earth" (72:8) and is greater than any human empire. This will be fulfilled when Christ returns to reign forever (Revelation 11:15). When we anticipate his worldwide rule, it fills our hearts with hope.

**72:19, 20** The second book of Psalms ends with "Amen, and Amen," as did Psalm 41, which closed the first book. The last

verse does not mean that David wrote this psalm, but that he wrote most of the psalms in the second book.

**73:1ff** Until Asaph entered God's sanctuary, he could not understand the justice in allowing the wicked to thrive while the righteous endured hardship. But when he saw that one day justice would be done, he acknowledged God's wisdom.

**73:1-20** Two strong themes wind their way through these verses: (1) The wicked prosper, leaving faithful people wondering why they bother to be good, and (2) the wealth of the wicked looks so inviting that faithful people may wish they could trade places. But these two themes come to unexpected ends, for the wealth of the wicked suddenly loses its power at death and the rewards for the good suddenly take on eternal value. What seemed like wealth is now waste, and what seemed worthless now lasts forever. Don't be tempted to wish you could trade places with evil people to get their wealth. One day they will wish they could trade places with you and have your eternal wealth.

73:19  
Num 16:21  
Isa 47:11

<sup>18</sup>Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction.  
<sup>19</sup>How are they *brought* into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.

<sup>20</sup>As a dream when *one* awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.

<sup>21</sup>Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins.

<sup>22</sup>So foolish *was* I, and ignorant: I was *as* a beast before thee.

<sup>23</sup>Nevertheless I *am* continually with thee: thou hast holden *me* by my right hand.

<sup>24</sup>Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me *to* glory.

<sup>25</sup>Whom have I in heaven *but thee?* and *there* is none upon earth *that I* desire beside thee.

<sup>26</sup>My flesh and my heart faileth: *but* God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

<sup>27</sup>For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.

<sup>28</sup>But *it* is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works.

73:22  
Eccl 3:18

73:24  
Pss 32:8; 48:14

73:26  
Pss 16:5; 38:10

73:27  
Ps 37:20

73:28  
Pss 40:5; 71:7  
Heb 10:22

**Theme:** A plea for God to help his people defend his cause and remember his promises. When we feel devastated or forgotten, we can plead to God for help, knowing that he hears.

**Author:** Asaph (or one of his descendants, since many believe this to be written after Jerusalem's fall in 586 B.C.)

## 74 *Maschil of Asaph*

<sup>1</sup>O God, why hast thou cast *us* off for ever? *why* doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?

<sup>2</sup>Remember thy congregation, *which* thou hast purchased of old; the rod of thine inheritance, *which* thou hast redeemed; this mount Zion, wherein thou hast dwelt.

<sup>3</sup>Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual desolations; *even* all *that* the enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary.

<sup>4</sup>Thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations; they set up their ensigns *for* signs.

<sup>5</sup>A *man* was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees.

<sup>6</sup>But now they break down the carved work thereof at once with axes and hammers.

<sup>7</sup>They have cast fire into thy sanctuary, they have defiled *by casting down* the dwelling place of thy name to the ground.

<sup>8</sup>They said in their hearts, Let us destroy them together: they have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land.

<sup>9</sup>We see not our signs: *there* is no more any prophet: neither *is there* among us any that knoweth how long.

<sup>10</sup>O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever?

73:21 *pricked in my reins:* embittered in my spirit. 74:4 *ensigns:* banners.

74:1  
Deut 29:20  
Pss 44:9; 89:46

74:2  
Deut 32:6, 9  
Ps 68:16

74:3  
Ps 79:1  
Isa 61:4

74:5  
Jer 46:22

74:7  
2 Kgs 25:9

74:8  
Ps 83:4

74:9  
Lev 24:16  
Ps 78:43

74:10  
Ps 44:16

**73:20** Asaph realized that the rich who put their hope, joy, and confidence in their wealth are living in a dream. A dream exists only in the mind of the dreamer. Don't let your life's goals be so unreal that you awaken too late and miss the reality of God's truth. Happiness and hope can be a reality, but only when they are based on God, not on riches. Because reality is in God, we should get as close to him as we can in order to be realistic about life.

**73:23, 24** From birth to death God has us continually in his grip. But far more we have the hope of resurrection. Though our courage and strength may fail, we know that one day we will be raised to life to serve him forever. He is our security and we must cling to him.

**74:1, 2** God's hot anger against Israel had grown during the many years of their sin and idolatry. His patience endured for generations, but at last it was set aside for judgment. If you fall into sin and quickly seek God's forgiveness, his mercy may come quickly and his anger may leave quickly. But if you practice sin against him for a long time, don't be surprised if his patience runs out.

**74:8** When enemy armies defeated Israel, they sacked and burned Jerusalem, trying to wipe out every trace of God. This has often been the response of people who hate God. Today many are trying to erase God from our public life and particularly from our schools. Do what you can to help maintain a Christian influence, but don't become discouraged when others appear to make great strides in eliminating all traces of God. They cannot eliminate his presence in the lives of believers.

**74:10–18** From our perspective, God sometimes seems slow to intervene on our behalf. But what might appear slow to us is good timing from God's perspective. It's easy to become impatient for God to act, but never give up waiting on him. When God is silent and you are deep in anguish, follow the method in this psalm. Review the great acts of God throughout biblical history and then review what he has done for you. This will restore the perspective that God is at work not only in history, but in your life today.

- 11 Why withdrawest thou thy hand, even thy right hand? pluck *it* out of thy bosom. **74:11**  
Ps 59:13
- 12 For God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth. **74:12**  
Ps 44:4
- 13 Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters. **74:13**  
Exod 14:21
- 14 Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces, *and* gavest him *to be* meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness. **74:15**  
Exod 14:21-22; 17:5-6
- 15 Thou didst cleave the fountain and the flood: thou driedst up mighty rivers. **74:16**  
Gen 1:14-18
- 16 The day is thine, the night also is thine: thou hast prepared the light and the sun. **74:17**  
Ps 136:7-8
- 17 Thou hast set all the borders of the earth: thou hast made summer and winter. **74:17**  
Gen 8:22
- 18 Remember this, *that* the enemy hath reproached, O LORD, and *that* the foolish people have blasphemed thy name. **74:17**  
Acts 17:26
- 19 O deliver not the soul of thy turtledove unto the multitude *of the wicked*: forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever. **74:18**  
Deut 32:6
- 20 Have respect unto the covenant: for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty. **74:20**  
Ps 39:8; 74:10
- 21 O let not the oppressed return ashamed: let the poor and needy praise thy name. **74:21**  
Gen 17:7
- 22 Arise, O God, plead thine own cause: remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily. **74:21**  
Ps 106:45
- 23 Forget not the voice of thine enemies: the tumult of those that rise up against thee increaseth continually. **74:22**  
Ps 35:10
- 74:23**  
Isa 41:17
- 74:22**  
Ps 43:1
- 74:23**  
Ps 65:7

**Theme:** Because God is the final judge, the tables will be turned upon the wicked. When arrogant people threaten our security, we can be confident that God will ultimately overrule and destroy them.

**Author:** Asaph

## 75 *To the chief Musician, Al-taschith, A Psalm or Song of Asaph*

- 1 Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, *unto thee* do we give thanks: for *that* thy name is near thy wondrous works declare. **75:1**  
Pss 44:1; 71:17
- 2 When I shall receive the congregation I will judge uprightly. **75:3**
- 3 The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it. Selah. **75:3**  
1 Sam 2:8
- 4 I said unto the fools, Deal not foolishly: and to the wicked, Lift not up the horn: **75:5**  
Ps 46:6
- 5 Lift not up your horn on high: speak *not with* a stiff neck. **75:5**  
Ps 94:4
- 6 For promotion *cometh* neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. **75:7**
- 7 But God *is* the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another. **75:7**  
1 Sam 2:7
- 8 For in the hand of the LORD *there is* a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring *them* out, *and* drink *them*. **75:9**  
Ps 40:10
- 9 But I will declare for ever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob. **75:10**
- 10 All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off; *but* the horns of the righteous shall be exalted. **75:10**  
Pss 89:17; 148:14

**74:11** pluck *it* out of thy bosom: take it from your garment. **74:13** dragons: sea serpents. **74:14** leviathan: the great sea monster. *meat*: food. **74:15** cleave: break open. **75:6** promotion: exaltation. **75:8** full of mixture: fully mixed. *wring*: drain.

**75:2** “When I shall receive the congregation” could read “when I choose the appointed time” or “when I am ready.” Children have difficulty grasping the concept of time. “It’s not time yet” is not a reason they easily understand. They only comprehend the present. As limited human beings, we can’t comprehend God’s perspective on time. We want everything now, not recognizing that God’s timing is better for us. When God is ready, he will do what needs to be done, not what we would like him to do. We may be as impatient as children, but we must not doubt the

wisdom of God’s timing. Until he reveals his plan, don’t take matters into your own hands.

**75:8** The judgment of God is coming against the wicked. God will pour out his fury on his enemies, and they will be forced to drink it. Drinking the cup of God’s judgment is a picture used frequently in Scripture (Isaiah 51:17, 22; Jeremiah 25:15; 49:12; Habakkuk 2:16; Revelation 14:10; 16:19; 18:6). It gives the impression of taking a dose of one’s own medicine. To drink the dregs means to suffer complete punishment.

**75:10** God will have the last word. He will decide the final outcome, settling all matters that concern both the wicked and the godly. The former will eventually experience his judgment; the latter will experience his faithful love. No matter how dark the days you face, make it your continual practice to acknowledge God’s sovereignty over your world. Tell him regularly how grateful you are that he has the final word.



**Theme:** A call for God to punish evildoers. Even man's angry revolt will be used by God to bring glory to himself.

**Author:** Asaph

## 76 *To the chief Musician on Neginoth, A Psalm or Song of Asaph*

**76:2**  
Pss 48:2-3; 132:13;  
135:21

**76:3**  
Ps 46:9

**76:5**  
Isa 10:12

**76:6**  
Exod 15:1, 21

**76:7**  
Ps 89:7  
Nah 1:6  
Rev 6:17

**76:8**  
1 Chr 16:30

**76:9**  
Pss 9:7-9; 72:4

**76:10**  
Exod 9:16  
Rom 9:17

<sup>1</sup>In Judah is God known: his name is great in Israel.

<sup>2</sup>In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion.

<sup>3</sup>There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle. Selah.

<sup>4</sup>Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey.

<sup>5</sup>The stouthearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep: and none of the men of might have found their hands.

<sup>6</sup>At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep.

<sup>7</sup>Thou, even thou, art to be feared: and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?

<sup>8</sup>Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still,

<sup>9</sup>When God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth. Selah.

<sup>10</sup>Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.

<sup>11</sup>Vow, and pay unto the LORD your God: let all that be round about him bring presents unto him that ought to be feared.

<sup>12</sup>He shall cut off the spirit of princes: he is terrible to the kings of the earth.

**Theme:** We are comforted through the hard times by remembering God's help in the past. Recalling God's miracles and previous works can give us courage to continue.

**Author:** Asaph

## 77 *To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun, A Psalm of Asaph*

<sup>1</sup>I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice; and he gave ear unto me.

<sup>2</sup>In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted.

<sup>3</sup>I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah.

<sup>4</sup>Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak.

<sup>5</sup>I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times.

<sup>6</sup>I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search.

<sup>7</sup>Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more?

<sup>8</sup>Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore?

<sup>9</sup>Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Selah.

<sup>10</sup>And I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High.

<sup>11</sup>I will remember the works of the LORD: surely I will remember thy wonders of old.

<sup>12</sup>I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.

<sup>13</sup>Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God?

**76:4** mountains of prey: everlasting mountains. **76:5** spoiled: plundered. *have found:* were able to use. **76:12** terrible: awesome. **77:2** sore ran: hand was stretched out. **77:6** commune with: meditate in.

**76:1ff** This psalm praises God for his awesome power. It was most likely written to celebrate the defeat of Sennacherib's army after it invaded Judah (see 2 Kings 18:13–19, 37).

**76:10** How can someone's wrath praise God? Hostility to God and his people gives God the opportunity to do great deeds. For example, the pharaoh of Egypt refused to free the Hebrew slaves (Exodus 5:1, 2), and thus allowed God to work mighty miracles for his people (Exodus 11:9). God turns the tables on evildoers and brings glory to himself from the foolishness of those who deny him or revolt against him.

**76:11, 12** This psalm closes with an invitation to the reader or listener. Having stated the futility of resisting God, the writer shifts to the alternatives. These verses speak of more than surrender to God; they encourage us to actively move toward God, making

commitments (vows) to him and carrying them out. What was the last promise you made to God? How much progress have you made in fulfilling it?

**77:1ff** Asaph cried out to God for courage during a time of deep distress. His plea was, "I need help." But in 77:13–20, the "I" is gone. As Asaph expressed his requests to God, his focus changed from thinking of himself to worshiping God: "Thou art the God that doest wonders" (77:14). As we pray to God, he lifts us from looking at ourselves to looking to him.

**77:11, 12** Memories of God's goodness and faithfulness sustained Israel through their difficulties. They knew that God was capable and trustworthy. When you meet new trials, review the good things God has done for you, and this will strengthen your faith.

<sup>14</sup>Thou *art* the God that doest wonders: thou hast declared thy strength among the people.

<sup>15</sup>Thou hast with *thine* arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.

<sup>16</sup>The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled.

<sup>17</sup>The clouds poured out water: the skies sent out a sound: thine arrows also went abroad.

<sup>18</sup>The voice of thy thunder *was* in the heaven: the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook.

<sup>19</sup>Thy way *is* in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.

<sup>20</sup>Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

**77:15**  
Exod 6:6  
Deut 9:29

**77:16**  
Exod 14:21

**77:17**  
Ps 68:33

**77:18**  
Judg 5:4

**77:19**  
Hab 3:15

**77:20**  
Exod 6:26; 13:21  
Ps 78:52  
Isa 63:11-13

**Theme:** Lessons from history. Asaph retells the history of the Jewish nation from the time of slavery in Egypt to David's reign. It was told over and over to each generation so they would not forget God and make the same mistakes as their ancestors.

**Author:** Asaph

## 78 *Maschil of Asaph*

<sup>1</sup>Give ear, O my people, *to* my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

<sup>2</sup>I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old:

<sup>3</sup>Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.

<sup>4</sup>We will not hide *them* from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.

<sup>5</sup>For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children:

<sup>6</sup>That the generation to come might know *them*, *even* the children *which* should be born; *who* should arise and declare *them* to their children:

<sup>7</sup>That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments:

<sup>8</sup>And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation *that* set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God.

<sup>9</sup>The children of Ephraim, *being* armed, *and* carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle.

<sup>10</sup>They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law;

<sup>11</sup>And forgat his works, and his wonders that he had shewed them.

<sup>12</sup>Marvellous things did he in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt, *in* the field of Zoan.

<sup>13</sup>He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through; and he made the waters to stand as an heap.

<sup>14</sup>In the daytime also he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire.

<sup>15</sup>He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave *them* drink as *out of* the great depths.

<sup>16</sup>He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers.

<sup>17</sup>And they sinned yet more against him by provoking the most High in the wilderness.

<sup>18</sup>And they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust.

<sup>19</sup>Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?

**78:2**  
<sup>†</sup>Matt 13:34-35

**78:3**  
Ps 44:1

**78:4**  
Deut 11:19  
Ps 22:30

**78:5**  
Deut 6:4-9

**78:6**  
Deut 11:19  
Ps 102:18

**78:7**  
Deut 4:2, 9  
Josh 22:5

**78:8**  
Exod 32:9  
Ezek 20:18

**78:10**  
2 Kgs 18:12

**78:11**  
Ps 106:13

**78:12**  
Num 13:22  
Isa 19:11

**78:13**  
Exod 14:21; 15:18

**78:14**  
Exod 13:21

**78:15**  
Exod 17:5-6  
<sup>†1</sup> Cor 10:4

**78:16**  
Num 20:8, 10-11

**78:17**  
Heb 3:16

**78:18**  
Num 11:4-5  
<sup>†1</sup> Cor 10:9-10

**78:19**  
Exod 16:3  
Num 21:5

**78:1** *incline your ears:* listen. **78:2** *dark sayings:* hidden lessons. **78:15** *clave:* split. **78:18** *tempted:* tested. *asking meat for their lust:* demanding the food they craved.

**77:16-20** These verses refer to the miraculous parting of the Red Sea. This great event is mentioned many times in the Old Testament (Exodus 14:21, 22; Joshua 24:6; Nehemiah 9:9; Psalms 74:13; 106:9; 136:13-15). The story of this incredible miracle was handed down from generation to generation, continually reminding the Israelites of God's power, protection, and love.

**78:1ff** The people of Israel rebelled and refused to give their hearts to God (78:8); forgot about God's miracles (78:11, 12); selfishly complained (78:19); made empty promises to repent (78:36); and were ungrateful (78:42). God recorded these painful and shameful truths in his Word so we can avoid the same errors. In 1 Corinthians 10:5-12, Paul uses this classic story to warn the early Christians.

**78:5** God commanded that the stories of his mighty acts in Israel's history and his laws be passed on from parents to children. This shows the purpose and importance of religious educa-

tion—to help each generation obey God and set their hope on him. It is important to keep children from repeating the same mistakes as their ancestors. What are you doing to pass on the history of God's work in the world to the next generation?

**78:9, 10** Ephraim was the most prominent tribe of Israel from the days of Moses to Saul's time. The Tabernacle was set up in its territory. There is no biblical record of Ephraim's soldiers fleeing in battle, so this is probably a metaphor referring to Ephraim's failure to provide strong leadership during those years. When David became king, the tribe of Judah gained prominence. Because of David's faith and obedience, God chose Jerusalem in Judah to be the place for the new Temple and rejected Ephraim (78:67), causing tension between the two tribes. This psalm may have been written because of that tension in order to demonstrate once again why God chose Judah. God often chooses to work through those who are most faithful to him.

**78:20**  
Num 20:11

**78:21**  
Num 11:1

**78:22-23**  
Heb 3:19

**78:23**  
Mal 3:10

**78:24**  
Exod 16:4  
†John 6:30-31

**78:26**  
Num 11:31

**78:27**  
Exod 16:13  
Ps 105:40

**78:29**  
Num 11:19-20

**78:31**  
Num 11:33-34

**78:32**  
Num 14:11

**78:33**  
Num 14:29, 34-35

**78:34**  
Hos 5:15

**78:35**  
Deut 9:26; 32:4

**78:36**  
Exod 32:7-8  
Ezek 33:31

**78:38**  
Exod 34:5-6  
Num 14:18-20

**78:39**  
Job 7:16-17  
Jas 4:14

**78:41**  
2 Kgs 19:22

**78:42**  
Judg 8:34

**78:43**  
Exod 7:3

**78:44**  
Exod 7:20  
Ps 105:29

**78:45**  
Exod 8:6, 24  
Ps 105:30-31

**78:46**  
Exod 10:14

**78:47**  
Exod 9:23-25  
Ps 105:32

**78:48**  
Exod 9:19

**78:49**  
Exod 15:7

**78:51**  
Exod 12:29-30  
Ps 105:36

**78:52**  
Ps 77:20

**78:53**  
Exod 14:19-20,  
27-28

**78:54**  
Exod 15:17

**78:55**  
Josh 23:4-5  
Pss 44:1-2;  
105:10-11

<sup>20</sup>Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?

<sup>21</sup>Therefore the LORD heard *this*, and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel;

<sup>22</sup>Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation:

<sup>23</sup>Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven,

<sup>24</sup>And had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven.

<sup>25</sup>Man did eat angels' food: he sent them meat to the full.

<sup>26</sup>He caused an east wind to blow in the heaven: and by his power he brought in the south wind.

<sup>27</sup>He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea:

<sup>28</sup>And he let *it* fall in the midst of their camp, round about their habitations.

<sup>29</sup>So they did eat, and were well filled: for he gave them their own desire;

<sup>30</sup>They were not estranged from their lust. But while their meat *was* yet in their mouths,

<sup>31</sup>The wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen *men* of Israel.

<sup>32</sup>For all this they sinned still, and believed not for his wondrous works.

<sup>33</sup>Therefore their days did he consume in vanity, and their years in trouble.

<sup>34</sup>When he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned and inquired early after God.

<sup>35</sup>And they remembered that God *was* their rock, and the high God their redeemer.

<sup>36</sup>Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues.

<sup>37</sup>For their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant.

<sup>38</sup>But he, *being* full of compassion, forgave *their* iniquity, and destroyed *them* not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath.

<sup>39</sup>For he remembered that they *were but* flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.

<sup>40</sup>How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, *and* grieve him in the desert!

<sup>41</sup>Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.

<sup>42</sup>They remembered not his hand, *nor* the day when he delivered them from the enemy.

<sup>43</sup>How he had wrought his signs in Egypt, and his wonders in the field of Zoan:

<sup>44</sup>And had turned their rivers into blood; and their floods, that they could not drink.

<sup>45</sup>He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them; and frogs, which destroyed them.

<sup>46</sup>He gave also their increase unto the caterpillar, and their labour unto the locust.

<sup>47</sup>He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore trees with frost.

<sup>48</sup>He gave up their cattle also to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunderbolts.

<sup>49</sup>He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels *among them*.

<sup>50</sup>He made a way to his anger; he spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence;

<sup>51</sup>And smote all the firstborn in Egypt; the chief of *their* strength in the tabernacles of Ham:

<sup>52</sup>But made his own people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.

<sup>53</sup>And he led them on safely, so that they feared not: but the sea overwhelmed their enemies.

<sup>54</sup>And he brought them to the border of his sanctuary, *even to* this mountain, *which* his right hand had purchased.

<sup>55</sup>He cast out the heathen also before them, and divided them an inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.

**78:20 smote:** struck. **78:21 wrath:** furious. **78:24 corn:** grain. **78:25 meat:** food. **78:28 habitations:** dwellings.

**78:30 estranged:** deprived. **lust:** craving. **78:31 fattest:** strongest. **smote:** struck. **chosen:** choice. **78:33 vanity:**

futility. **78:34 inquired early after:** sought diligently for. **78:43 wrought:** performed. **78:44 floods:** streams.

**78:45 divers sorts:** swarms. **78:49 evil:** destroying. **78:50 way to:** path for. **78:51 smote:** struck down. **tabernacles:**

tents. **78:55 heathen:** nations.

**78:36, 37** Over and over the children of Israel said they would follow God, but then they turned away from him. The problem was that they made commitments to God with their mouths and not with their hearts; thus their repentance was empty. Talk

is cheap. God wants our lives to back up our spiritual claims and promises.

56 Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies:  
 57 But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers: they were turned aside like a deceitful bow.  
 58 For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images.  
 59 When God heard *this*, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel:  
 60 So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent *which* he placed among men;  
 61 And delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand.  
 62 He gave his people over also unto the sword; and was wroth with his inheritance.  
 63 The fire consumed their young men; and their maidens were not given to marriage.  
 64 Their priests fell by the sword; and their widows made no lamentation.  
 65 Then the LORD awaked as one out of sleep, *and* like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine.  
 66 And he smote his enemies in the hinder parts: he put them to a perpetual reproach.  
 67 Moreover he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim:  
 68 But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved.  
 69 And he built his sanctuary like high *palaces*, like the earth which he hath established for ever.  
 70 He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds:  
 71 From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.  
 72 So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands.

**78:58**  
 Lev 26:1  
 Deut 32:16, 21  
**78:59**  
 Lev 26:30  
 Deut 32:19  
**78:60**  
 1 Sam 4:11  
**78:61**  
 1 Sam 4:17  
**78:62**  
 Judg 20:21  
 1 Sam 4:10  
**78:63**  
 Num 11:1  
 Jer 7:34; 16:9  
**78:64**  
 1 Sam 22:18  
**78:65**  
 Isa 42:13  
**78:66**  
 1 Sam 5:6  
**78:68**  
 Ps 87:1-2  
**78:69**  
 1 Kgs 6:1-38  
**78:70**  
 1 Sam 16:10-12  
**78:71**  
 2 Sam 5:2; 7:8  
 1 Chr 11:2  
**78:72**  
 1 Kgs 9:4

**Theme:** When outraged by injustice, cry out to God, not against him. In times of disaster, our mood may be anger, but our trust must remain in God.

**Author:** Asaph (or one of his descendants), probably written after the Babylonians had leveled Jerusalem (see 2 Kings 25)

## 79 *A Psalm of Asaph*

1 O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps.

2 The dead bodies of thy servants have they given *to be* meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth.

3 Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem; and *there was* none to bury *them*.

4 We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us.

5 How long, LORD? wilt thou be angry for ever? shall thy jealousy burn like fire?

6 Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name.

7 For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling place.

8 O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us: for we are brought very low.

**78:56** tempted: tested. **78:57** deceitful: faulty. **78:58** graven: carved. **78:59** wroth: furious. **78:66** smote his enemies in the hinder parts: beat back his enemies. **78:67** tabernacle: tent. **78:69** palaces: mountains. **79:1** heathen: nations. on heaps: in ruins. **79:2** meat: food. **79:8** speedily prevent: quickly meet.

**79:1**  
 Ps 74:2-7  
 Jer 26:18  
 Lam 1:10  
**79:2**  
 Deut 28:26  
 Jer 7:33; 16:4  
**79:3**  
 Jer 14:16  
**79:4**  
 Ps 44:13  
**79:5**  
 Ps 74:1, 9-10  
 Zeph 3:8  
**79:6**  
 Jer 10:25  
 2 Thes 1:8  
**79:7**  
 Ps 53:4  
**79:8**  
 Pss 106:6; 142:6  
 Isa 26:5; 64:9

**78:58** Can God be jealous? According to Scripture, yes (see Deuteronomy 4:24; 5:9, Nahum 1:2). Like everything else about God, his jealousy is perfect. In this case, the offense caused by the ungratefulness and unfaithfulness of his people provoked a just and holy response from God. The shock conveyed in these verses comes not from God's jealousy but from the fact that God, though justified in passing absolute judgment, persistently seasons his responses with grace and patience. God's jealousy over you represents an honor worthy of your deepest gratitude.

**78:71, 72** Although David was occupying the throne of Israel when this psalm was written, he is called a shepherd and not a king. Shepherding, a common profession in biblical times, was a highly responsible job. The flocks were completely dependent upon shepherds for guidance, provision, and protection. David

had spent his early years as a shepherd (1 Samuel 16:10, 11). This was a training ground for the future responsibilities God had in store for him. When he was ready, God took him from caring for sheep to caring for Israel, God's people. Don't treat your present situation lightly or irresponsibly; it may be God's training ground for your future.

**79:6** According to the Old Testament, God's wrath and judgment often fell on entire nations because of the sins of people within those nations. Here Asaph pleaded for judgment on kingdoms that refused to acknowledge God's authority. Ironically, Asaph's own nation of Judah was being judged by God for refusing to do this very thing (2 Chronicles 36:14-20). These were people who had sworn allegiance to God but were now rejecting him. This made their judgment even worse.

**79:9**  
2 Chr 14:11  
Jer 14:7  
**79:10**  
Ps 115:2

<sup>9</sup>Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake.

<sup>10</sup>Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God? let him be known among the heathen in our sight *by* the revenging of the blood of thy servants *which is* shed.

<sup>11</sup>Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die;

<sup>12</sup>And render unto our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom their reproach, wherewith they have reproached thee, O Lord.

<sup>13</sup>So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever: we will shew forth thy praise to all generations.

**79:12**  
Gen 4:15  
Ps 74:10, 18, 22  
**79:13**  
Pss 74:1; 95:7;  
100:3  
Isa 43:21

**Theme:** A prayer for revival and restoration after experiencing destruction. God is our only hope for salvation.

**Author:** Asaph (or one of his descendants), probably written after the Northern Kingdom of Israel was defeated and its people deported to Assyria

**80** *To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim-Eduth, A Psalm of Asaph*

<sup>1</sup>Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest *between* the cherubims, shine forth.

<sup>2</sup>Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh stir up thy strength, and come *and* save us.

<sup>3</sup>Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.

<sup>4</sup>O LORD God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?

<sup>5</sup>Thou feedest them with the bread of tears; and givest them tears to drink in great measure.

<sup>6</sup>Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours: and our enemies laugh among themselves.

**80:1**  
Exod 25:22  
Pss 23:1; 77:20  
**80:2**  
Ps 35:23  
**80:3**  
Num 6:24-26  
Pss 31:16; 60:1  
Lam 5:21  
**80:4**  
Pss 79:5; 84:8  
**80:5**  
Pss 42:3; 102:9  
**80:6**  
Pss 44:13; 79:4

**79:12** bosom: laps. **80:1** cherubims: mighty angels. **80:3** turn us again: restore us.

**PRAYER IN THE BOOK OF PSALMS**



Prayer is human communication with God. Psalms could be described as a collection of song-prayers. Probably the most striking feature of these prayers is their unedited honesty. The words often express our own feelings—feelings which we would prefer no one, much less God, ever knew. Making these psalms our prayers can teach us a great deal about how God wants us to communicate with him. Too often we give God a watered-down version of our feelings, hoping we won't offend him or make him curious about our motives. As we use the psalms to express our feelings, we learn that honesty, openness, and sincerity are valuable to God.

Following are several types of prayers with examples from Psalms. Note that the psalm writers communicated with God in a variety of ways for a variety of reasons. Each of us is invited to communicate with God. Using the psalms will enrich your personal prayer life.

<i>Prayers of:</i>	<i>Psalms:</i>
Praise to God . . . . .	100; 113; 117
Thanksgiving by a community . . . . .	67; 75; 136
Thanksgiving by an individual . . . . .	18; 30; 32
Request by the community . . . . .	79; 80; 123
Request by an individual . . . . .	3; 55; 86
Sorrow by the community . . . . .	44; 74; 137
Sorrow by an individual . . . . .	5; 6; 120
Anger . . . . .	35; 109; 140
Confession . . . . .	6; 32; 51
Faith . . . . .	11; 16; 23

**79:10** Can we expect God to care for us so others won't scoff at our beliefs? In the end, God's glory will be evident to all people, but in the meantime, we must endure suffering with patience and allow God to purify us through it. For reasons we do not know, the heathen are allowed to scoff at believers. We should be prepared for criticism, jokes, and unkind remarks because God does not place us beyond the attacks of scoffers.

**80:1** Cherubims are mighty angels. That God "dwellest between the cherubims" is a reminder of his presence on the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25:17–22).

**80:3, 7, 19** Three times the writer calls on God to "turn us again." Repentance involves humbling ourselves and turning to God to receive his forgiveness and restoration. As we turn to God, he helps us see ourselves, including our sin, more clearly. And as we see our sin, we must repeat the process of repentance.



- <sup>7</sup>Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.
- <sup>8</sup>Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it.
- <sup>9</sup>Thou preparedst *room* before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land.
- <sup>10</sup>The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof *were like* the goodly cedars.
- <sup>11</sup>She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river.
- <sup>12</sup>Why hast thou *then* broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her?
- <sup>13</sup>The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it.
- <sup>14</sup>Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine;
- <sup>15</sup>And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch *that* thou madest strong for thyself.
- <sup>16</sup>*It is* burned with fire, *it is* cut down: they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.
- <sup>17</sup>Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man *whom* thou madest strong for thyself.
- <sup>18</sup>So will not we go back from thee: quicken us, and we will call upon thy name.
- <sup>19</sup>Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.

**80:8**  
2 Chr 20:7  
Ps 44:2  
Isa 5:2, 7  
Jer 2:21; 11:17  
Ezek 17:6, 23  
Amos 9:15

**80:9**  
Exod 23:28  
Isa 5:2  
Hos 14:5

**80:12**  
Ps 89:40  
Isa 5:5

**80:13**  
Jer 5:6

**80:16**  
2 Chr 36:19  
Ps 39:11  
Jer 52:13

**80:17**  
Ps 89:21

**80:18**  
Ps 71:20  
Isa 50:5

**Theme:** A holiday hymn. This hymn celebrates the Exodus from Egypt—God's goodness versus Israel's waywardness. God is our deliverer in spite of our wanderings.

**Author:** Asaph, probably written to be used during the Feast of Tabernacles

## 81 *To the chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm of Asaph*

- <sup>1</sup>Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.
- <sup>2</sup>Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery.
- <sup>3</sup>Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day.
- <sup>4</sup>For this *was* a statute for Israel, *and* a law of the God of Jacob.
- <sup>5</sup>This he ordained in Joseph *for* a testimony, when he went out through the land of Egypt: *where* I heard a language *that* I understood not.
- <sup>6</sup>I removed his shoulder from the burden: his hands were delivered from the pots.
- <sup>7</sup>Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee; I answered thee in the secret place of thunder: I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. Selah.
- <sup>8</sup>Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me;
- <sup>9</sup>There shall no strange god be in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god.
- <sup>10</sup>I *am* the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.
- <sup>11</sup>But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me.
- <sup>12</sup>So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: *and* they walked in their own counsels.
- <sup>13</sup>Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, *and* Israel had walked in my ways!

**81:1**  
Pss 46:1; 59:16;  
66:1; 95:1-2

**81:2**  
Pss 108:2; 149:3

**81:3**  
Lev 23:24  
Num 10:10

**81:5**  
Exod 11:4

**81:6**  
Isa 9:4; 10:27

**81:7**  
Exod 2:23; 17:5-7;  
19:19  
Pss 50:15; 95:8

**81:9**  
Exod 20:3  
Isa 43:12

**81:10**  
Exod 20:2  
Pss 78:25; 103:5

**81:11**  
Exod 32:1

**81:12**  
Acts 7:42  
Rom 1:24, 26

**81:13**  
Deut 5:29  
Isa 48:18  
Jer 7:23

**80:8** *heathen:* nations. **80:9** *preparedst room before:* cleared the ground for. **80:10** *goodly:* mighty. **80:13** *wood:* forest. **80:14** *visit:* take care of. **80:18** *quicken:* revive. **80:19** *turn us again:* restore us. **81:2** *take a psalm:* raise a song. *timbrel:* tambourine. *psaltery:* lyre. **81:6** *pots:* baskets. **81:7** *proved:* tested. **81:9** *strange:* foreign. **81:11** *would none of me:* would not obey me. **81:12** *lust:* stubbornness.

**80:17** The "son of man" is probably not the Messiah, but Israel, whom God calls elsewhere his "firstborn" (Exodus 4:22). The psalm writer is making a plea that God would restore his mercy to Israel, the people he chose to bring his message into the world.

**81:1-5** Israel's holidays reminded the nation of God's great miracles. They were times of rejoicing and times to renew one's strength for life's daily struggles. At Christmas, do your thoughts revolve mostly around presents? Is Easter only a warm anticipation of spring, and Thanksgiving only a good meal? Remember the spiritual origins of these special days, and use them as opportunities to worship God for his goodness to you, your family, and your nation.

**81:2-4** Music and worship go hand in hand. David instituted music for the Temple worship services (1 Chronicles 25). Worship

involves the whole person, and music helps focus worship by lifting one's thoughts and emotions to God. Through music we can reflect upon our sins as well as celebrate God's greatness.

**81:11, 12** God let the Israelites go on blindly, stubbornly, and selfishly, when they should have been obeying and pursuing God's desires. God sometimes lets us continue in our stubbornness to bring us to our senses. He does not keep us from rebelling, because he wants us to learn the consequences of sin. He desires to use these experiences to turn people back from greater sin to faith in him.

**81:13-16** God had provided in his covenant that he would restore his people if they would listen to him and return to him (Exodus 23:22-27; Leviticus 26:3-13; Deuteronomy 7:12-26; 28:1-14). God remains faithful in our relationship with him (2 Timothy 2:11-13), patiently waiting for our response so he can pour out his blessings. Conduct an inventory of your spiritual life right now. In what ways are you allowing God to affect your daily decisions?



**81:14**  
Ps 47:3  
Amos 1:8

<sup>14</sup>I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries.  
<sup>15</sup>The haters of the LORD should have submitted themselves unto him: but their time should have endured for ever.

**81:16**  
Deut 32:13-14

<sup>16</sup>He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee.

**82:1**  
Ps 58:11  
Isa 3:13

**Theme:** A fair judge. God will judge the wicked who have treated others unfairly.  
**Author:** Asaph

## 82 *A Psalm of Asaph*

**82:2**  
Deut 1:17  
Ps 58:1-2  
Prov 18:5

<sup>1</sup>God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods.

**82:3**  
Deut 24:17

<sup>2</sup>How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah.

**82:4**  
Job 29:12

<sup>3</sup>Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.

**82:6**  
<sup>1</sup>John 10:34

<sup>4</sup>Deliver the poor and needy: rid *them* out of the hand of the wicked.

**82:7**  
Pss 49:12; 83:17

<sup>5</sup>They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course.

**82:8**  
Pss 2:8; 12:5  
Rev 11:15

<sup>6</sup>I have said, Ye *are* gods; and all of you *are* children of the most High.

<sup>7</sup>But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.

<sup>8</sup>Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.

**Theme:** Combatting God's enemies. This psalm is a prayer for God to do whatever it takes to convince the world that he is indeed God. Someday all will recognize and admit that God is in charge.

**Author:** Asaph (or one of his descendants)

**83:1**  
Pss 28:1; 109:1

## 83 *A Song or Psalm of Asaph*

**83:2**  
Pss 2:1; 81:15  
Isa 17:12

<sup>1</sup>Keep not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God.

**83:3**  
Ps 31:20

<sup>2</sup>For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate thee have lifted up the head.

**83:4**  
Esth 3:5-6

<sup>3</sup>They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones.

**83:5**  
Ps 2:2

<sup>4</sup>They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from *being* a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.

**83:6**  
Gen 25:12-16  
2 Chr 20:1, 10  
Ps 137:7

<sup>5</sup>For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against thee:

<sup>6</sup>The tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites; of Moab, and the Hagarenes;

**83:7**  
1 Sam 4:1; 15:2  
2 Chr 20:10  
Ezek 27:2-3, 9

<sup>7</sup>Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre;

<sup>8</sup>Assur also is joined with them: they have holpen the children of Lot. Selah.

**83:9**  
Judg 4:22-23

<sup>9</sup>Do unto them as *unto* the Midianites; as *to* Sisera, as *to* Jabin, at the brook of Kison:

**83:11**  
Judg 7:25; 8:21

<sup>10</sup>Which perished at En-dor: they became *as* dung for the earth.

<sup>11</sup>Make their nobles like Oreb, and like Zeeb: yea, all their princes as Zebah, and as Zalmunna:

**83:12**  
2 Chr 20:11

<sup>12</sup>Who said, Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession.

**82:5** *out of course:* shaken. **83:3** *hidden:* precious. **83:6** *tabernacles:* tents. **83:8** *holpen:* helped.

**82:1ff** God judges human judges. The integrity of the justice system in a nation provides a clear indication of the health of that society. As is the case with all leadership, judges derive their authority ultimately from God and will give an account to God for their verdicts. Believers are commanded to pray for "kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Timothy 2:2). This psalm reminds us to include judges of every kind in our prayers because we directly benefit from their integrity.

**82:6** This psalm calls the judges of Israel "gods" and "children of the most High." They were called gods because they represented God in executing judgment. John 10:34-36 records Jesus using this passage to defend his claims to be God. His argument was as follows: If God would call mere men "gods," why was it blasphemous for him, the Son of God, to declare himself equal with God?

**83:5-8** This alliance against God may refer to the gathering of certain kings to fight against Jehoshaphat and the people of

Judah (2 Chronicles 20). The psalm's author is called Asaph, but this is an inclusive term meaning Asaph or one of his descendants. A descendant of Asaph named Jahaziel prophesied victory for Judah in the battle against Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 20:13-17). The psalmist says the alliance against Judah is really against God. Thus Jahaziel exclaimed, "The battle is not yours, but God's" (2 Chronicles 20:15). Because God is in supreme charge of all the earth (83:18), the enemies of Israel were considered God's enemies.

**83:6** The Hagarenes may have been the descendants of Hagar (Genesis 21:8-21).

**83:8-11** The "children of Lot" refers to the Moabites and Ammonites (Genesis 19:36-38). (For the story of Oreb and Zeeb, see Judges 7:25; for Zebah and Zalmonna, see Judges 8:21.)

<sup>13</sup>O my God, make them like a wheel; as the stubble before the wind.

<sup>14</sup>As the fire burneth a wood, and as the flame setteth the mountains on fire;

<sup>15</sup>So persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm.

<sup>16</sup>Fill their faces with shame; that they may seek thy name, O LORD.

<sup>17</sup>Let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish:

<sup>18</sup>That *men* may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, *art* the most high over all the earth.

**83:14**  
Deut 32:22  
Isa 9:18  
**83:15**  
Job 9:17  
Ps 58:9  
**83:16**  
Ps 109:29  
**83:18**  
Ps 59:13  
Isa 45:21

**Theme:** God's living presence is our greatest joy. His radiant presence helps us grow in strength, grace, and glory.

**Author:** The sons of Korah (Temple assistants)

## 84

*To the chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm for the sons of Korah*

<sup>1</sup>How amiable *are* thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts!

<sup>2</sup>My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.

<sup>3</sup>Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, *even* thine altars, O LORD of hosts, my King, and my God.

<sup>4</sup>Blessed *are* they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah.

<sup>5</sup>Blessed *is* the man whose strength *is* in thee; in whose heart *are* the ways of *them*.

<sup>6</sup>*Who* passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools.

<sup>7</sup>They go from strength to strength, *every one of them* in Zion appeareth before God.

<sup>8</sup>O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah.

<sup>9</sup>Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.

<sup>10</sup>For a day in thy courts *is* better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

<sup>11</sup>For the LORD God *is* a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good *thing* will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

<sup>12</sup>O LORD of hosts, blessed *is* the man that trusteth in thee.

**84:1**  
Ps 27:4  
**84:2**  
Pss 42:1-2; 63:1  
**84:3**  
Ps 43:4  
**84:4**  
Ps 65:4  
**84:5**  
Ps 81:1  
**84:6**  
Ps 107:35  
**84:7**  
Deut 16:16  
Isa 40:31  
**84:9**  
Gen 15:1  
2 Sam 19:21  
Ps 115:9-11  
**84:10**  
1 Chr 23:5  
Ps 27:4  
**84:11**  
Ps 2:12  
**84:12**  
Ps 2:12

**Theme:** From reverence to restoration. Reverence leads to forgiveness, restoring our love and joy for God.

**Author:** The sons of Korah (Temple assistants)

## 85

*To the chief Musician, A Psalm for the sons of Korah*

<sup>1</sup>LORD, thou hast been favourable unto thy land: thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.

<sup>2</sup>Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin. Selah.

<sup>3</sup>Thou hast taken away all thy wrath: thou hast turned *thyself* from the fierceness of thine anger.

<sup>4</sup>Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger toward us to cease.

<sup>5</sup>Wilt thou be angry with us for ever? wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations?

**83:14** wood: forest. **84:1** amiable: lovely. tabernacles: dwelling places. **85:1** captivity: fortunes. **85:4** turn us: restore us. **85:5** draw out: prolong.

**85:1**  
Jer 30:18  
Joel 3:1  
**85:2**  
Num 14:19  
Ps 32:1  
Jer 31:34  
**85:3**  
Exod 32:12  
Deut 13:17  
Ps 78:38  
**85:4**  
Ps 80:3, 7  
**85:5**  
Pss 74:1; 79:5; 80:4

**83:13-18** Surrounding Judah were heathen nations that sought its downfall. The writer prayed that God would blow his hot breath of judgment upon them until, in their defeat, they recognized that the Lord is supreme over all rulers of the earth. Sometimes we must be dragged in the dust before we will look up and see the Lord; we must be defeated before we can have the ultimate victory. Wouldn't it be better to seek the Lord in times of prosperity than to wait until his judgment is upon us?

**84:1, 4** The writer longed to get away from the bustling world and meet God inside his holy Temple. We can meet God anywhere at any time, but we know that going into a church building helps us step aside from the busy mainstream of life into a place where we can quietly meditate and pray. We find joy, not only in the beautiful building, but in the praying, singing, teaching, preaching, and fellowship that take place there.

**84:5-7** The pilgrimage to the Temple passed through the barren valley of Baca. No specific valley has been identified, and it may have been symbolic of the times of struggles and tears through which people must pass on their way to meet God. Growing strong in God's presence is often preceded by our pilgrimage through barren places in our lives. The person who loves to spend time in God's presence will see his or her adversity as an opportunity to experience God's faithfulness even more deeply. If you are walking through your own valley of Baca today, be sure you are on a pilgrimage toward God, not away from him.

**84:11** This verse does not promise that God will give us everything we think is good, but that he will not withhold what is permanently good. He will give us the means to walk along his paths, but we must do the walking. When we obey him, he will not hold anything back that will help us continue to live for him.

**85:6**  
Ps 149:2  
**85:8**  
Pss 29:11; 78:57  
**85:9**  
Ps 84:11  
Isa 46:13  
John 1:14  
**85:10**  
Ps 72:3  
Prov 3:3  
Isa 32:17  
**85:11**  
Isa 45:8  
**85:12**  
Ps 84:11  
Jas 1:17

<sup>6</sup>Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?  
<sup>7</sup>Shew us thy mercy, O LORD, and grant us thy salvation.  
<sup>8</sup>I will hear what God the LORD will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.  
<sup>9</sup>Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land.  
<sup>10</sup>Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed *each other*.  
<sup>11</sup>Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.  
<sup>12</sup>Yea, the LORD shall give *that which is* good; and our land shall yield her increase.  
<sup>13</sup>Righteousness shall go before him; and shall set *us* in the way of his steps.

**Theme:** Devoted trust in times of deep trouble

**Author:** David

## 86 *A Prayer of David*

**86:1**  
Pss 17:6; 40:17  
**86:2**  
Pss 4:3; 25:20  
**86:5**  
Pss 103:8; 130:4  
**86:6**  
Ps 55:1  
**86:7**  
Ps 50:14-15  
**86:8**  
Exod 15:11  
Deut 3:24  
**86:9**  
Isa 66:23  
Rev 15:3-4  
**86:10**  
Deut 32:39  
Isa 44:6, 8  
Mark 12:29  
1 Cor 8:4  
**86:11**  
Ps 25:5  
Jer 32:39  
**86:12**  
Ps 111:1  
**86:13**  
Ps 30:3  
**86:14**  
Ps 54:3  
**86:16**  
Ps 68:35

<sup>1</sup>Bow down thine ear, O LORD, hear me: for I *am* poor and needy.  
<sup>2</sup>Preserve my soul; for I *am* holy: O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee.  
<sup>3</sup>Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily.  
<sup>4</sup>Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.  
<sup>5</sup>For thou, Lord, *art* good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.  
<sup>6</sup>Give ear, O LORD, unto my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplications.  
<sup>7</sup>In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee: for thou wilt answer me.  
<sup>8</sup>Among the gods *there is* none like unto thee, O Lord; neither *are there any works* like unto thy works.  
<sup>9</sup>All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name.  
<sup>10</sup>For thou *art* great, and doest wondrous things: thou *art* God alone.  
<sup>11</sup>Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.  
<sup>12</sup>I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore.  
<sup>13</sup>For great *is* thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.  
<sup>14</sup>O God, the proud are risen against me, and the assemblies of violent *men* have sought after my soul; and have not set thee before them.  
<sup>15</sup>But thou, O Lord, *art* a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.  
<sup>16</sup>O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me; give thy strength unto thy servant, and save the son of thine handmaid.

**85:13** set us in the way of: make a pathway for. **86:6** the voice of my supplications: my cry for mercy. **86:14** the assemblies: a band. **86:15** longsuffering: slow to anger.

**85:6, 7** The writer was asking God to revive his people, bringing them back to spiritual life. God is capable of reviving both churches and individuals. He can pour out his love on us, renewing our love for him. If you need renewal in your church, family, or personal spiritual life, ask God to give you a fresh touch of his love and kindness.

**85:9-13** As the writer cries out for God's intervention, he can almost see, taste, and hear God's response. These five verses describe what God can do for those who welcome his herald—righteousness (85:13). This psalm illustrates that the greater the presence of righteousness (obedience to God), the clearer the examples of God's blessings. This principle works equally in the life of a nation or an individual. The more we first seek God's righteousness and his kingdom, as Jesus pointed out, the more we will see everything else taken care of by God (see Matthew 6:25-33).

**86:7** Sometimes our trouble or pain is so great that all we can do is cry out to God, "Preserve my soul" or "Protect me" (86:2). We feel so poor and needy. Many times when there is no relief in sight, all we can do is acknowledge the greatness of God and wait for better days ahead. The conviction that God answers prayer will sustain us in such difficult times.

**86:8-10** The God of the Bible is unique! He is alive and able to work mighty miracles for those who love him. All man-created deities are powerless before him because they are merely inventions of the mind, not living beings. The Lord alone is "worthy . . . to receive glory and honour and power" (Revelation 4:11). Although people around the world believe in many heathen deities, you need never fear that God is only one among many or that you may be worshiping the wrong God. The Lord alone is God.

**86:11-14** This prayer within a prayer captures a glimpse of vibrant spiritual vitality. Two requests are made: "teach me thy way" and "unite my heart." Each request has a God-centered purpose: that the person praying would "walk in thy truth" and "fear thy name." No matter how well we know and follow God, we can always ask him to increase our awareness and improve our obedience. Jesus echoed one of these requests in the sixth beatitude, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). Commit this prayer to memory and use it often.

<sup>17</sup>Shew me a token for good; that they which hate me may see *it*, and be ashamed: because thou, LORD, hast holpen me, and comforted me.

**86:17**  
Pss 112:10; 118:13;  
119:122

**Theme:** Jerusalem, where all believers will one day gather

**Author:** The sons of Korah (Temple assistants)

## 87 *A Psalm or Song for the sons of Korah*

<sup>1</sup>His foundation *is* in the holy mountains.

<sup>2</sup>The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

<sup>3</sup>Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah.

<sup>4</sup>I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me: behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this *man* was born there.

<sup>5</sup>And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her.

<sup>6</sup>The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, *that* this *man* was born there. Selah.

<sup>7</sup>As well the singers as the players on instruments *shall be there*: all my springs *are* in thee.

**87:1**  
Ps 78:68-69  
Isa 28:16

**87:2**  
Ps 78:67-68

**87:3**  
Pss 46:4; 48:8  
Isa 60:1

**87:4**  
Pss 45:12; 68:31  
Isa 19:23-25

**87:5**  
Ps 48:8

**87:6**  
Isa 4:2-4

**87:7**  
Ps 36:9

**Theme:** When there is no relief in sight. God understands even our deepest misery.

**Author:** Heman, one of the sons of Korah (possibly the same man mentioned in 1 Chronicles 15:19; 16:41; 25:4, 5 as a musician and the king's prophet)

## 88 *A Song or Psalm for the sons of Korah, to the chief Musician upon Mahalath Leannoth, Maschil of Heman the Ezrahite*

<sup>1</sup>O LORD God of my salvation, I have cried day *and* night before thee:

<sup>2</sup>Let my prayer come before thee: incline thine ear unto my cry;

<sup>3</sup>For my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave.

<sup>4</sup>I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man *that hath* no strength:

<sup>5</sup>Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more: and they are cut off from thy hand.

<sup>6</sup>Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps.

<sup>7</sup>Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted *me* with all thy waves. Selah.

<sup>8</sup>Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination unto them: *I am* shut up, and I cannot come forth.

<sup>9</sup>Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction: LORD, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee.

<sup>10</sup>Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise *and* praise thee? Selah.

<sup>11</sup>Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? *or* thy faithfulness in destruction?

<sup>12</sup>Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

<sup>13</sup>But unto thee have I cried, O LORD; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee.

<sup>14</sup>LORD, why castest thou off my soul? *why* hidest thou thy face from me?

**88:1**  
Ps 22:2  
Luke 18:7

**88:2**  
Pss 18:6; 86:1

**88:3**  
Pss 107:18; 116:3

**88:4**  
Ps 28:1

**88:5**  
Ps 31:12  
Isa 53:8

**88:6**  
Pss 32:4; 69:15;  
143:3  
Lam 3:55

**88:7**  
Ps 42:7

**88:8**  
Job 19:19; 30:10  
Ps 31:11

**88:9**  
Job 11:13  
Pss 6:7; 22:2

**88:10**  
Ps 6:5

**88:11**  
Job 10:20-21

**88:12**  
Pss 5:3; 119:147

**88:13**  
Job 13:24  
Ps 13:1

**86:17** token: sign. *holpen*: helped. **87:6** writeth up: registers. **88:2** incline: turn. **88:7** lieth hard: lies heavily. **88:13** prevent: come to.

**86:17** It is right to pray for a sign of God's goodness. As David found, it may be just what we need. But let us not overlook the signs he has already given: the support of family and friends, the fellowship of other Christians, the light of each new day. Most of all, God gives us the confidence that he knows our situation no matter how desperate it becomes, and he cares.

**87:1ff** Jerusalem (the holy mountain, Zion) and its Temple here represent the future community of all believers. This psalm looks ahead to the holy city of God described in Revelation 21:10-27. The honor of living there will be granted to all whose names are recorded in the Lamb's book of life (Revelation 21:27). It is God's grace that forms and sustains this wonderful community. How could anyone refuse God's offer to be part of this celebration?

**88:1ff** Have you ever felt as if you have hit bottom? The writer is so low he even despairs of life itself. Although everything is bad and getting worse, he is able to tell it all to God. This is one of the few psalms that gives no answer or expression of hope. Don't

think that you must always be cheerful and positive. Grief and depression take time to heal. No matter how we feel, we can always take our problems to God and express our anguish to him.

**88:5** Our feelings may be as obvious and painful as those expressed by the psalm writer, but they are never the complete picture. In fact, our feelings are usually very unstable. When we bring our unedited feelings to God, we allow him to point out where they are incomplete. We are in trouble whenever we give our feelings divine authority or assume that God can't handle what we feel. Praying the psalms teaches us to bring God everything about us and trains us to experience his presence even when our feelings tell us otherwise.

**88:13-15** The writer of this psalm was close to death, perhaps debilitated by disease and forsaken by friends. But he could still pray. Perhaps you are not so afflicted, but you know someone who is. Consider being a prayer companion for that person. This psalm can be a prayer you can lift to God on his or her behalf.

**88:15**  
Job 6:4

**88:17**  
Ps 22:12, 16

**88:18**  
Job 19:13  
Pss 31:11; 38:11

<sup>15</sup>I *am* afflicted and ready to die from *my* youth up: *while* I suffer thy terrors I am distracted.

<sup>16</sup>Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off.

<sup>17</sup>They came round about me daily like water; they compassed me about together.

<sup>18</sup>Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, *and* mine acquaintance into darkness.

**Theme:** God's promise to preserve David's descendants. God's promise is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who will reign for eternity. The love and kindness promised to David is ours in Christ.

**Author:** Ethan (a Levite leader and possibly one of the head musicians in the Temple 1 Chronicles 15:17, 19), or one of his descendants

## 89 *Maschil of Ethan the Ezrahite*

**89:1**  
Pss 40:10; 59:16

**89:2**  
Ps 36:5

**89:3**  
2 Sam 7:16  
Ps 132:11  
Isa 9:7  
Luke 1:31-33

**89:4**  
2 Sam 7:16  
Isa 9:7  
Luke 1:33

**89:6**  
Pss 29:1; 96:4

**89:7**  
Pss 47:2; 96:4

**89:8**  
Pss 35:10; 71:19

**89:9**  
Pss 65:7; 107:29

**89:10**  
Ps 18:14

**89:11**  
Gen 1:1  
1 Chr 29:11  
Ps 24:1

**89:12**  
Josh 12:1; 19:22

**89:13**  
Ps 118:16

**89:14**  
Ps 97:2

**89:15**  
Num 10:10

**89:17**  
Pss 44:3; 75:10;  
148:14

**89:18**  
Ps 47:9

**89:19**  
2 Sam 17:10  
1 Kgs 11:34

<sup>1</sup>I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations.

<sup>2</sup>For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens.

<sup>3</sup>I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant,

<sup>4</sup>Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah.

<sup>5</sup>And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O LORD: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints.

<sup>6</sup>For who in the heaven can be compared unto the LORD? *who* among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the LORD?

<sup>7</sup>God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them *that are* about him.

<sup>8</sup>O LORD God of hosts, *who is* a strong LORD like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee?

<sup>9</sup>Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them.

<sup>10</sup>Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain; thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm.

<sup>11</sup>The heavens *are* thine, the earth also *is* thine: *as for* the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them.

<sup>12</sup>The north and the south thou hast created them: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name.

<sup>13</sup>Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand, *and* high is thy right hand.

<sup>14</sup>Justice and judgment *are* the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.

<sup>15</sup>Blessed *is* the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance.

<sup>16</sup>In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.

<sup>17</sup>For thou *art* the glory of their strength: and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted.

<sup>18</sup>For the LORD *is* our defence; and the Holy One of Israel *is* our king.

<sup>19</sup>Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon *one that is* mighty; I have exalted *one* chosen out of the people.

**88:15** *distracted:* distraught. **88:17** *compassed:* engulfed. **89:7** *had:* held. **89:11** *the fulness thereof:* all that is in it. **89:14** *justice and judgment:* righteousness and justice. *habitation:* foundation. **89:19** *laid help upon:* given help to.

**89:1ff** This psalm was written to describe the glorious reign of David. God had promised to make David the mightiest king on earth and to keep his descendants on the throne forever (2 Samuel 7:8–16). Because Jerusalem was destroyed and kings no longer reigned there, these verses can only look forward prophetically to the future reign of Jesus Christ, David's descendant. Verse 27 is a prophecy concerning David's never-ending dynasty, which will be consummated by Christ's future reign over the world (see Revelation 22:5).

**89:5** The congregation of the "saints" or holy ones generally refers to angels. In the courts of heaven, a myriad of angels praise the Lord. This scene is one of majesty and grandeur to show that God is beyond compare. His power and purity place him high above nature and angels. See Deuteronomy 33:2, Luke 2:13, and Hebrews 12:22 for more about angels.

**89:12** Mount Tabor, though low in elevation (1,900 feet), was the

scene of Deborah's victory in Judges 4. Mount Hermon (9,000 feet) was tall and majestic.

**89:14, 15** Righteousness and justice, mercy and truth surround God on his throne; they are central characteristics of the way God rules. They summarize his character. As God's ambassadors, we should exhibit the same traits when we deal with people. Make sure your actions flow out of justice, righteousness, mercy, and truth because any unfair, unloving, or dishonest action cannot come from God.

**89:17, 24** "In thy favour our horn shall be exalted" means that David was promised God's power to accomplish God's will. Without God's help, we are weak and powerless, inadequate for even the simplest spiritual tasks. But when we are filled with God's Spirit, his power flows through us and our accomplishments will exceed our expectations.



20 I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him:  
 21 With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him.  
 22 The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him.  
 23 And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him.  
 24 But my faithfulness and my mercy *shall be* with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted.  
 25 I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers.  
 26 He shall cry unto me, Thou *art* my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation.  
 27 Also I will make him *my* firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth.  
 28 My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him.  
 29 His seed also will I make *to endure* for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.  
 30 If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments;  
 31 If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments;  
 32 Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.  
 33 Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.  
 34 My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.  
 35 Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David.  
 36 His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me.  
 37 It shall be established for ever as the moon, and *as* a faithful witness in heaven. Selah.  
 38 But thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been wroth with thine anointed.  
 39 Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant: thou hast profaned his crown *by casting it* to the ground.  
 40 Thou hast broken down all his hedges; thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin.  
 41 All that pass by the way spoil him: he is a reproach to his neighbours.  
 42 Thou hast set up the right hand of his adversaries; thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice.  
 43 Thou hast also turned the edge of his sword, and hast not made him to stand in the battle.  
 44 Thou hast made his glory to cease, and cast his throne down to the ground.  
 45 The days of his youth hast thou shortened: thou hast covered him with shame. Selah.  
 46 How long, LORD? wilt thou hide thyself for ever? shall thy wrath burn like fire?  
 47 Remember how short my time is: wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?  
 48 What man *is he that* liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? Selah.  
 49 Lord, where *are* thy former lovingkindnesses, *which* thou swarest unto David in thy truth?  
 50 Remember, Lord, the reproach of thy servants; *how* I do bear in my bosom *the reproach* of all the mighty people;  
 51 Wherewith thine enemies have reproached, O LORD; wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine anointed.  
 52 Blessed *be* the LORD for evermore. Amen, and Amen.

89:20  
1 Sam 16:13  
†Acts 13:22  
89:22  
2 Sam 7:10-11  
89:23  
2 Sam 7:9  
89:26  
2 Sam 7:14  
1 Chr 22:10  
89:27  
Pss 2:7; 72:11  
Rev 19:16  
89:29  
1 Kgs 2:4  
Isa 9:7  
Jer 33:17  
89:30  
2 Sam 7:14  
89:33  
2 Sam 7:15  
89:34  
Num 23:19  
Jer 33:20-21  
89:36  
Ps 72:5  
89:38  
1 Chr 28:9  
89:39  
Ps 78:59  
Lam 2:7; 5:16  
89:40  
Ps 80:12  
Lam 2:2, 5  
89:42  
Pss 13:2; 80:6  
89:43  
Ps 44:10  
89:44  
Ezek 28:7  
89:45  
Ps 44:15-16  
89:46  
Pss 13:1; 79:5  
89:47  
Job 7:7; 14:1  
Ps 39:5-6  
Eccl 1:2; 2:11  
89:48  
Ps 22:29  
Heb 11:5  
89:49  
2 Sam 7:15  
89:51  
Ps 74:9-10, 18, 22  
89:52  
Pss 41:13; 106:48

#### D. THE FOURTH BOOK OF PSALMS (90:1—106:48)

These psalms include a prayer of Moses, a psalm about oppressors, and a psalm praising God as our King. These psalms remind us that we should remember our place and be submissive before the almighty God.

**Theme:** God's eternal nature is contrasted with man's frailty. Our time on earth is limited and we are to use it wisely, not living for the moment, but with our eternal home in mind. This psalm is often used in funerals.

**Author:** Moses, making this one of the oldest psalms (For more information on Moses, see his Profile in Exodus 14, p.113.)

## 90 *A Prayer of Moses the man of God*

1 Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.

2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou *art* God.

89:22 *exact upon:* outwit. 89:28 *stand fast:* never end. 89:33 *suffer:* allow. 89:38 *wroth:* furious. 89:41 *spoil:* plunder. 89:47 *vain:* futility. 89:50 *bosom:* heart.

90:1  
Deut 33:27  
Ezek 11:16  
Rev 21:3  
90:2  
Gen 1:1  
Ps 102:24-25, 27  
Prov 8:22-26

89:34-37 In light of Israel's continual disobedience throughout history, this is an amazing promise. God promised that David's

descendants would always sit on the throne (89:29), but that if the people disobeyed, they would be punished (89:30-32). And yet,



**90:3**  
Job 34:14-15

**90:4**  
Ps 39:5  
2 Pet 3:8

**90:5**  
Job 14:2; 20:8  
Isa 40:6  
Matt 6:30

**90:6**  
Ps 92:7

**90:9**  
Ps 78:33

**90:10**  
Ps 78:39  
Eccl 12:2-7

**90:11**  
Ps 76:7

**90:12**  
Ps 39:4

**90:13**  
Deut 32:36

**90:14**  
Pss 36:8; 103:5  
Jer 31:14

**90:15**  
Pss 31:10; 86:4

**90:16**  
Ps 44:1

**90:17**  
Ps 27:4  
Isa 26:12

**91:1**  
Isa 25:4; 32:2

**91:2**  
Pss 18:2; 142:5  
Jer 16:19

**91:3**  
2 Chr 20:9  
Ps 124:7

**91:4**  
Pss 35:2; 57:1; 63:7

**91:5**  
Job 5:19-23  
Ps 23:4

**91:6**  
Job 5:22

**91:8**  
Ps 37:34

<sup>3</sup>Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.

<sup>4</sup>For a thousand years in thy sight *are but* as yesterday when it is past, and *as* a watch in the night.

<sup>5</sup>Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are *as* a sleep: in the morning *they are* like grass *which* groweth up.

<sup>6</sup>In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.

<sup>7</sup>For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled.

<sup>8</sup>Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret *sins* in the light of thy countenance.

<sup>9</sup>For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale *that is told*.

<sup>10</sup>The days of our years *are* threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength *they be* fourscore years, yet *is* their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

<sup>11</sup>Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, *so is* thy wrath.

<sup>12</sup>So teach us to number our days, that we may apply *our* hearts unto wisdom.

<sup>13</sup>Return, O LORD, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants.

<sup>14</sup>O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

<sup>15</sup>Make us glad according to the days *wherein* thou hast afflicted us, *and* the years *wherein* we have seen evil.

<sup>16</sup>Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children.

<sup>17</sup>And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

**Theme:** God's protection in the midst of danger. God doesn't promise a world free from danger, but he does promise his help whenever we face danger.

**Author:** Anonymous

**91** <sup>1</sup>He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

<sup>2</sup>I will say of the LORD, *He is* my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

<sup>3</sup>Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, *and* from the noisome pestilence.

<sup>4</sup>He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth *shall be thy* shield and buckler.

<sup>5</sup>Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; *nor* for the arrow *that* flieth by day;

<sup>6</sup>*Nor* for the pestilence *that* walketh in darkness; *nor* for the destruction *that* wasteth at noonday.

<sup>7</sup>A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; *but* it shall not come nigh thee.

<sup>8</sup>Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.

**90:9** *spend our years as a tale that is told:* finish our years with a sigh. **90:10** *fly away:* are gone. **90:13** *let it repent thee concerning:* have compassion on. **91:3** *noisome:* fatal. **91:4** *shield and buckler:* large and small shield. **91:6** *wasteth:* destroys.

even through their disobedience and punishment, God would never break faith with them (89:33). Israel *did* disobey, evil ran rampant, the nation was divided, exile came—but through it all, a remnant of God's people remained faithful. Centuries later, the Messiah arrived, the eternal King from David's line, just as God had promised. All that God promises, he fulfills. He will not take back even one word of what he says. God can also be trusted to save us as he promised he would (Hebrews 6:13–18). God is completely reliable.

**90:4** Moses reminds us that a thousand years are like a day to the Lord. God is not limited by time. It's easy to get discouraged when years pass and the world doesn't get better. We sometimes wonder if God is able to see the future. But don't make the mistake of assuming that God has our limitations. God is completely unrestricted by time. Because he is eternal, we can depend on him.

**90:8** God knows all our sins as if they were spread out before him, even the secret ones. We don't need to cover up our sins before him, because we can talk openly and honestly with him. But while he knows all that terrible information about us, God still loves us and wants to forgive us. This should encourage us to come to him rather than frighten us into covering up our sin.

**90:12** Realizing that life is short helps us to use the little time we have more wisely and for eternal good. Take time to number your days by asking, "What do I want to see happen in my life before I die? What small step could I take toward that purpose today?"

**90:17** Because God has given us the desire for eternal life (see the note on Ecclesiastes 3:11), we are not satisfied with merely living "threescore years and ten" (70 years, see 90:10). We desire to see God's eternal plan revealed now and for our work to reflect his permanence. If you feel dissatisfied with this life and all its imperfections, remember the desire to see your work established is placed there by God. But it can only be realized in eternity. Until then we must apply ourselves to loving and serving God.

**91:1–6** God is a refuge, a shelter when we are afraid. The writer's faith in God as Protector would carry him through all the dangers and fears of life. This should be a picture of our trust—trading all our fears for faith in him, no matter how intense our fears. To do this we must "dwell" or "abide" with him (91:1). By consigning ourselves to his protection and pledging our daily devotion to him, we will be kept safe.

<sup>9</sup>Because thou hast made the LORD, *which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation;*

<sup>10</sup>There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

<sup>11</sup>For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

<sup>12</sup>They shall bear thee up in *their* hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

<sup>13</sup>Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.

<sup>14</sup>Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.

<sup>15</sup>He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: *I will be* with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.

<sup>16</sup>With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.

**91:10**  
Prov 12:21

**91:11**  
Ps 34:7  
<sup>1</sup>Matt 4:6  
<sup>1</sup>Luke 4:9-11

**91:13**  
Judg 14:6  
Luke 10:19

**91:15**  
1 Sam 2:30  
Ps 50:15  
John 12:26

**Theme:** Be thankful and faithful every day. This psalm was used in Temple services on the Sabbath.

**Author:** Anonymous

## 92 *A Psalm or Song for the sabbath day*

<sup>1</sup>*It is a good thing* to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High:

<sup>2</sup>To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night,

<sup>3</sup>Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound.

<sup>4</sup>For thou, LORD, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands.

<sup>5</sup>O LORD, how great are thy works! *and* thy thoughts are very deep.

<sup>6</sup>A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this.

<sup>7</sup>When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; *it is* that they shall be destroyed for ever:

<sup>8</sup>But thou, LORD, *art most* high for evermore.

<sup>9</sup>For, lo, thine enemies, O LORD, for, lo, thine enemies shall perish; all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.

<sup>10</sup>But my horn shalt thou exalt like *the horn of* an unicorn: I shall be anointed with fresh oil.

<sup>11</sup>Mine eye also shall see *my desire* on mine enemies, *and* mine ears shall hear *my desire* of the wicked that rise up against me.

<sup>12</sup>The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

<sup>13</sup>Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God.

<sup>14</sup>They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing;

<sup>15</sup>To shew that the LORD *is* upright: *he is* my rock, and *there is* no unrighteousness in him.

**92:3**  
1 Sam 10:5  
1 Chr 13:8  
Neh 12:27

**92:5**  
Pss 40:5; 139:17  
Rom 11:33

**92:6**  
Ps 73:22

**92:7**  
Ps 37:38

**92:9**  
Pss 37:20; 68:1

**92:10**  
Pss 23:5; 75:10

**92:11**  
Ps 54:7

**92:14**  
Isa 37:31  
John 15:2

**92:15**  
Rom 9:14

**91:9** *habitation:* dwelling place. **91:13** *adder:* cobra. *dragon:* serpent. **91:14** *set him on high:* protect him. **92:3** *psaltery:* lyre. *a solemn:* harmonious. **92:6** *brutish:* senseless. **92:10** *an unicorn:* a wild ox. **92:14** *fat and flourishing:* vital and green.

**91:11** One of the functions of angels is to watch over believers (Hebrews 1:14). There are examples of guardian angels in Scripture (1 Kings 19:5; Daniel 6:22; Matthew 18:10; Luke 16:22; Acts 12:7), although there is no indication that one angel is assigned to each believer. Angels can also be God's messengers (Matthew 2:13; Acts 27:23, 24). Angels are not visible, except on special occasions (Numbers 22:31; Luke 2:9). Verses 11 and 12 were quoted by Satan when he tempted Jesus (Matthew 4:6; Luke 4:10, 11). It is comforting to know that God watches over us even in times of great stress and fear.

**92:1, 2** During the Thanksgiving holiday, we focus on our blessings and express our gratitude to God for them. But thanks should be on our lips daily. We can never say thank you enough to parents, friends, leaders, and especially to God. When thanks-

giving becomes an integral part of your life, you will find that your attitude toward life will change. You will become more positive, gracious, loving, and humble.

**92:12, 13** Palm trees are known for their long life. To flourish like palm trees means to stand tall and to live long. The cedars of Lebanon grew to 120 feet in height and up to 30 feet in circumference; thus, they were solid, strong, and immovable. The writer saw believers as upright, strong, and unmoved by the winds of circumstance. Those who place their faith firmly in God can have this strength and vitality.

**92:14** Honoring God is not restricted to young people who seem to have unlimited strength and energy. Even in old age, devoted believers can produce spiritual fruit. There are many faithful older people who still have a fresh outlook and can teach us from a lifetime of serving God. Seek out an elderly friend or relative who can tell you about their experiences with the Lord and challenge you to new heights of spiritual growth.

**Theme:** God's unchanging and almighty nature. His creation reminds us of his great power.

**Author:** Anonymous

**93:1**  
Pss 65:6; 96:10;  
97:1; 99:1; 104:1  
Isa 51:9

**93** <sup>1</sup>The LORD reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the LORD is clothed with strength, *wherewith* he hath girded himself: the world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved.

<sup>2</sup>Thy throne *is* established of old: thou *art* from everlasting.

<sup>3</sup>The floods have lifted up, O LORD, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves.

<sup>4</sup>The LORD on high *is* mightier than the noise of many waters, *yea, than* the mighty waves of the sea.

<sup>5</sup>Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness becometh thine house, O LORD, for ever.

**93:2**  
Lam 5:19

**93:3**  
Ps 98:7-8

**93:4**  
Ps 65:7

**93:5**  
Ps 19:7  
1 Cor 3:17

**Theme:** God will keep his people from the severe punishment awaiting the wicked. Since God is holy and just, we can be certain that the wicked will not prevail.

**Author:** Anonymous

**94:1**  
Deut 32:35  
Isa 35:4  
Nah 1:2  
Rom 12:19

**94** <sup>1</sup>O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself.

<sup>2</sup>Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth: render a reward to the proud.

<sup>3</sup>LORD, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph?

<sup>4</sup>*How long* shall they utter *and* speak hard things? *and* all the workers of iniquity boast themselves?

<sup>5</sup>They break in pieces thy people, O LORD, and afflict thine heritage.

<sup>6</sup>They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless.

<sup>7</sup>Yet they say, The LORD shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard *it*.

<sup>8</sup>Understand, ye brutish among the people: and *ye* fools, when will ye be wise?

<sup>9</sup>He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?

<sup>10</sup>He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct? he that teacheth man knowledge,

*shall not he know?*

<sup>11</sup>The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man, that they *are* vanity.

<sup>12</sup>Blessed *is* the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of thy law;

<sup>13</sup>That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked.

**94:4**  
Pss 31:18; 52:1

**94:6**  
Isa 10:2

**94:9**  
Exod 4:11  
Prov 20:12

**94:10**  
Ps 44:2

**94:11**  
1 Cor 3:20

**94:12**  
Deut 8:5  
Heb 12:5-6

**93:1** *girded:* armed. *stablished:* established. **94:4** *hard things:* arrogant words. **94:7** *regard:* notice. **94:8** *brutish:* senseless. **94:9** *planted:* made. **94:10** *heathen:* nations. **94:11** *vanity:* futile.

## JUSTICE IN THE BOOK OF PSALMS

Justice is a major theme in Psalms. The psalm writers praise God because he is just; they plead for him to intervene and bring justice where there is oppression and wickedness; they condemn the wicked who trust in their wealth; they extol the righteous who are just toward their neighbors.

Justice in Psalms is more than honesty. It is active intervention on behalf of the helpless, especially the poor. The psalm writers do not merely wish the poor could be given what they need, they plead with God to destroy those nations that are subverting justice and oppressing God's people.

Here are some examples of psalms that speak about justice. As you read them, ask yourself, "Who is my neighbor? Does my lifestyle—my work, my play, my buying habits, my giving—help or hurt people who have less than I do? What one thing could I do this week to help a needy person?"

Selected psalms that emphasize this theme are 7, 9, 15, 37, 50, 72, 75, 82, 94, and 145.

**93:1ff** Jewish tradition claims that the next seven psalms (93—99) anticipate some of the works of the Messiah. Psalm 93 is said to have been used in postcaptivity Temple services and may have been written during Sennacherib's invasion (2 Kings 18:13—19:37).

**93:5** The atmosphere of God's eternal reign is holiness. Holiness will be the oxygen of heaven. Meanwhile, God's perfect moral character highlights his glory and can be seen everywhere. God will never do anything that is not morally perfect. This reassures us that we can trust him, yet it places a demand on us. Our desire to live holy lives (dedicated to God and morally clean) is our only suitable response. We must never use unholy means to reach a holy goal,

for God says, "Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy" (Leviticus 19:2).

**94:12, 13** At times, God must discipline us to help us. This is similar to a loving parent disciplining his child. The discipline is not very enjoyable to the child, but is essential to teach him or her right from wrong. The Bible says that "no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness" (Hebrews 12:11). When you feel God's hand of correction, accept it as proof of his love. Realize that God is urging you to follow his path instead of stubbornly going your own way.

<sup>14</sup>For the LORD will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance.

<sup>15</sup>But judgment shall return unto righteousness: and all the upright in heart shall follow it.

<sup>16</sup>Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? *or* who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?

<sup>17</sup>Unless the LORD *had been* my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence.

<sup>18</sup>When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy, O LORD, held me up.

<sup>19</sup>In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul.

<sup>20</sup>Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?

<sup>21</sup>They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood.

<sup>22</sup>But the LORD is my defence; and my God *is* the rock of my refuge.

<sup>23</sup>And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; *yea*, the LORD our God shall cut them off.

**Theme:** An invitation to worship God

**Author:** David

**95** <sup>1</sup>O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

<sup>2</sup>Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.

<sup>3</sup>For the LORD *is* a great God, and a great King above all gods.

<sup>4</sup>In his hand *are* the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills *is* his also.

<sup>5</sup>The sea *is* his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry *land*.

<sup>6</sup>O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.

<sup>7</sup>For he *is* our God; and we *are* the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. Today if ye will hear his voice,

<sup>8</sup>Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, *and* as *in* the day of temptation in the wilderness:

<sup>9</sup>When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work.

<sup>10</sup>Forty years long was I grieved with *this* generation, and said, It *is* a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways:

<sup>11</sup>Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.

**Theme:** How to praise God. We can sing about him, tell others about him, worship him, give him glory, bring offerings to him, and live holy lives.

**Author:** Probably David, since this psalm closely resembles David's hymn of praise in 1 Chronicles 16:23–36

**96** <sup>1</sup>O sing unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD, all the earth.

<sup>2</sup>Sing unto the LORD, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day.

<sup>3</sup>Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people.

<sup>4</sup>For the LORD *is* great, and greatly to be praised: he *is* to be feared above all gods.

<sup>5</sup>For all the gods of the nations *are* idols: but the LORD made the heavens.

<sup>6</sup>Honour and majesty *are* before him: strength and beauty *are* in his sanctuary.

<sup>7</sup>Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength.

**94:20** *the throne of iniquity:* wicked rulers. *have fellowship:* be allied. *frameth mischief:* devises evil. **95:8** *provocation:* rebellion. **95:9** *tempted:* tested. **96:3** *heathen:* nations.

**94:14**  
1 Sam 12:22  
Rom 11:2

**94:15**  
Isa 42:3  
Mic 7:9

**94:16**  
Num 10:35  
Isa 33:10

**94:17**  
Ps 124:1-2

**94:19**  
Isa 57:18; 66:13

**94:20**  
Ps 58:2

**94:21**  
Exod 23:7  
Matt 27:4

**94:22**  
Pss 59:9; 71:7

**94:23**  
Pss 7:16; 140:9, 11

**95:2**  
Mic 6:6-8

**95:4**  
Ps 135:5-6

**95:5**  
Gen 1:9-10

**95:7-11**  
<sup>7</sup>Heb 3:7-11, 15; 4:7

**95:8**  
Num 20:13  
Deut 6:16

**95:9**  
Num 14:22

**95:10**  
Acts 7:36; 13:18  
Heb 3:10, 17

**95:11**  
Deut 1:35  
<sup>7</sup>Heb 4:3, 5

**96:1-13**  
<sup>1</sup>Chr 16:23-33

**96:2**  
Ps 71:15

**96:3**  
Ps 145:12

**96:5**  
1 Chr 16:26  
Isa 42:5

**96:6**  
Ps 104:1

**95:1-4** Songs, shouts, gratitude, and praise erupted from those gathered to worship the Lord. While there are certainly many examples of stillness and silence in God's presence taught and illustrated in Scripture, there are equally as many examples of raucous worship. Both peaceful silence and enthusiastic praise are appropriate expressions of worship to our great God.

**95:8** A hardened heart is as useless as a hardened lump of clay or a hardened loaf of bread. Nothing can restore it and make it useful. The writer warns against hardening our hearts as Israel did in the wilderness by continuing to resist God's will (Exodus 17:7). The Israelites had been so convinced that God couldn't deliver them that they simply lost their faith in him. When someone's heart becomes hardened, that person is so stubbornly set in his ways that he cannot turn to God. This does not happen all

at once; it is the result of a series of choices to disregard God's will. If you resist God long enough, he may cast you aside like hardened bread, useless and worthless.

**95:11** What keeps us from God's ultimate blessings? Unthankful hearts (95:2), not listening (95:7), hardening our hearts (95:8), doubt (95:9). In Hebrews 4:5-11, we are encouraged not to harden our hearts, but to reject the glamour of sin and anything else that would lead us away from God.

**96:1-4** If we believe God is great, we cannot help telling others about him. The best witnessing happens when our hearts are full of appreciation for what he has done. God has chosen to use us to "declare . . . his wonders among all people." Praise for our great God overflows from his creation and should overflow from our lips. How well are you doing at telling others about God's greatness?

**96:8**  
Ps 115:1

**96:9**  
1 Chr 16:29  
2 Chr 20:21

**96:10**  
Pss 58:11; 67:4;  
93:1

**96:11**  
Pss 97:1; 98:7  
Isa 49:13

**96:12**  
Isa 35:1; 44:23;  
55:12-13

**97:1**  
Ps 96:10-11

**97:2**  
Exod 19:9  
Deut 4:11  
1 Kgs 8:12

Pss 18:11; 89:14

**97:3**  
Heb 12:29

**97:5**  
Josh 3:11  
Amos 9:5

**97:6**  
Ps 50:6

**97:7**  
Jer 10:14  
†Heb 1:6

**97:8**  
Zeph 3:14

**97:9**  
Exod 18:11  
Pss 83:18; 95:3

**97:10**  
Dan 3:28  
Rom 12:9

**97:11**  
Job 22:28

**97:12**  
Ps 32:11

<sup>8</sup>Give unto the LORD the glory *due unto* his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts.

<sup>9</sup>O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth.

<sup>10</sup>Say among the heathen *that* the LORD reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously.

<sup>11</sup>Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof.

<sup>12</sup>Let the field be joyful, and all that *is* therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice

<sup>13</sup>Before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.

**Theme:** God, our awesome Conqueror, is righteous and just.

**Author:** Anonymous

**97** <sup>1</sup>The LORD reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad *thereof*.  
<sup>2</sup>Clouds and darkness *are* round about him: righteousness and judgment *are* the habitation of his throne.

<sup>3</sup>A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about.

<sup>4</sup>His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled.

<sup>5</sup>The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.

<sup>6</sup>The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory.

<sup>7</sup>Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him, all *ye* gods.

<sup>8</sup>Zion heard, and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced because of thy judgments, O LORD.

<sup>9</sup>For thou, LORD, *art* high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods.

<sup>10</sup>Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.

<sup>11</sup>Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.

<sup>12</sup>Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

**Theme:** A song of joy and victory. Because God is victorious over evil, all those who follow him will be victorious with him when he judges the earth.

**Author:** Anonymous

## 98 *A Psalm*

<sup>1</sup>O sing unto the LORD a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.

<sup>2</sup>The LORD hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen.

<sup>3</sup>He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

<sup>4</sup>Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.

**96:12** *wood:* forest. **97:2** *judgment:* justice. *habitation:* foundation. **97:7** *graven:* carved. **98:2** *heathen:* nations.

**97:2** The clouds and darkness that surround God symbolize his unapproachable holiness and the inability of people to find him on their own.

**97:7** People worship all kinds of images and idols. Although God reveals himself and his love through nature and the Bible, many decide to ignore or reject him and pursue goals they believe are more important. The Bible makes it clear that these people are idol worshipers because they give their highest loyalty to something other than God. One day we will stand before God in all his glory and power. Then we will see all our goals and accomplishments for what they really are. How foolish our earthly pursuits will be then!

**97:10** A sincere purpose to please God will result in an alignment of your desires with God's desires. You will love what God loves and hate what God hates. If you love the Lord, you will hate evil.

If you do not despise the actions of people who take advantage of others, if you admire people who only look out for themselves, or if you envy those who get ahead using any means to accomplish their ends, then your primary desire in life is not to please God. Learn to love God's way and hate evil in every form—not only the obvious sins but also the socially acceptable ones.

**98:1ff** This is a psalm of praise anticipating the coming of God to rule his people. Jesus fulfilled this anticipation when he came to save all people from their sins (98:2, 3), and he will come again to judge the world (98:8, 9). God is both perfectly loving and perfectly just. He is merciful when he punishes, and he overlooks no sin when he loves. Praise him for his promise to save you and to return again.

<sup>5</sup>Sing unto the LORD with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm.

<sup>6</sup>With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the LORD, the King.

<sup>7</sup>Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

<sup>8</sup>Let the floods clap *their* hands: let the hills be joyful together

<sup>9</sup>Before the LORD; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.

98:6

Num 10:10  
2 Chr 15:14

98:7

Pss 24:1; 96:11

98:9

Ps 96:10, 13

**Theme:** Praise for God's fairness and holiness. Because God is perfectly just and fair, we can trust him completely.

**Author:** Anonymous

**99** <sup>1</sup>The LORD reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth *between* the cherubims; let the earth be moved.

<sup>2</sup>The LORD is great in Zion; and he is high above all the people.

<sup>3</sup>Let them praise thy great and terrible name; *for it is holy.*

<sup>4</sup>The king's strength also loveth judgment; thou dost establish equity, thou executest judgment and righteousness in Jacob.

<sup>5</sup>Exalt ye the LORD our God, and worship at his footstool; *for he is holy.*

<sup>6</sup>Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon the LORD, and he answered them.

<sup>7</sup>He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar: they kept his testimonies, and the ordinance *that he gave them.*

<sup>8</sup>Thou answeredst them, O LORD our God: thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.

<sup>9</sup>Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the LORD our God is holy.

99:1

Exod 25:22  
1 Sam 4:4

99:3

Deut 28:58  
Josh 24:19  
1 Sam 2:2

99:4

Ps 17:2

99:6

Exod 15:25  
1 Sam 7:9

99:7

Exod 33:9  
Num 12:5

99:8

Num 14:20

**Theme:** An invitation to enter joyfully into God's presence. His faithfulness extends to our generation and beyond.

**Author:** Anonymous

**100** *A Psalm of praise*

<sup>1</sup>Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.

<sup>2</sup>Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.

<sup>3</sup>Know ye that the LORD he is God: *it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*

<sup>4</sup>Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, *and* into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, *and* bless his name.

<sup>5</sup>For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth *endureth* to all generations.

98:7 *the fulness thereof: all that is in it.* 98:8 *floods: rivers.* 99:1 *cherubims: mighty angels. be moved: shake.*  
99:3 *terrible: awesome.* 99:4 *judgment: justice.* 99:8 *of their inventions: on their evil deeds.*

100:1

Ps 98:4

100:2

Deut 28:47

100:3

1 Kgs 18:39  
Ezek 34:30-31  
Mark 14:27  
John 10:11

100:4

Pss 95:2; 96:2

100:5

Pss 25:8; 119:90

**99:1** Cherubim are divine beings that are one of several ranks of angels. (For more on angels, see the note on 91:11.)

**99:3** Everyone should praise God's great and holy name because his name points to his divine nature, his personage, and his reputation. But the name of God is used so carelessly in conversation that we have lost sight of its holiness. How easy it is to treat God lightly in everyday life. If you claim him as your Father, live worthy of the family name. Reverence God's name and give him praise by both your *words* and your *life*.

**99:5** God's holiness is terribly frightening for sinners, but a wonderful comfort for believers. God is morally perfect and is set apart from people and sin. He has no weaknesses or shortcomings. For sinners, this is frightening because all their inadequacies and evil are exposed by the light of God's holiness. God cannot tolerate, ignore, or excuse sin. For believers, God's holiness gives comfort because, as we worship him, we are lifted from the mire of sin. As we believe in him and humble ourselves before him, we are made holy.

**99:6** The Bible records several instances where Moses, Aaron, and Samuel cried out to God for help (Exodus 15:25; 17:4; Numbers 11:11–15; 12:13; 14:13ff; 16:44–48; 1 Samuel 7:5, 9; 15:11).

**100:3** David tells us to acknowledge that the Lord is God! How can we do that? We acknowledge him when we shout our praises, appreciate his status as our Creator, accept his authority in every detail of life, enthusiastically agree with the guidance he gives us, and express our thanks for his unfailing love.

**100:3** God is our Creator; we did not create ourselves. Many people live as though they are the creator and center of their own little world. This mind-set leads to pride, greed, idolatry, and if everything should be taken away, a loss of hope itself. But when we realize that God created us and gives us all we have, we will want to give to others as God has given to us (2 Corinthians 9:8). Then, even if all is lost, we still have God and all he gives us.

**100:4** God alone is worthy of being worshiped. What is your attitude toward worship? Do you willingly and joyfully come into God's presence, or are you just going through the motions, reluctantly going to church? This psalm tells us to remember God's goodness and dependability, and then to worship with thanksgiving and praise!



**Theme:** A prayer for help to walk a blameless path. To live with integrity, both our efforts and God's help are necessary.

**Author:** David

## 101 *A Psalm of David*

**101:1**  
Pss 89:1; 145:7

<sup>1</sup>I will sing of mercy and judgment: unto thee, O LORD, will I sing.

<sup>2</sup>I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.

<sup>3</sup>I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; *it* shall not cleave to me.

**101:4**  
Prov 11:20

<sup>4</sup>A froward heart shall depart from me: I will not know a wicked *person*.

**101:5**  
Ps 50:20  
Prov 6:16-19

<sup>5</sup>Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer.

<sup>6</sup>Mine eyes *shall be* upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me: he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.

**101:6**  
Ps 119:1

<sup>7</sup>He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.

**101:8**  
Pss 46:4; 75:10;  
118:10-12

<sup>8</sup>I will early destroy all the wicked of the land; that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the LORD.

**Theme:** The cure for distress. Because God is living, eternal, and unchanging, we can trust him to help his people in this generation just as he helped his people in past generations.

**Author:** Anonymous

## 102 *A Prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the LORD.*

**102:1**  
Exod 2:23  
1 Sam 9:16

<sup>1</sup>Hear my prayer, O LORD, and let my cry come unto thee.

<sup>2</sup>Hide not thy face from me in the day *when* I am in trouble; incline thine ear unto me: in the day *when* I call answer me speedily.

**102:2**  
Ps 69:17

<sup>3</sup>For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth.

**102:3**  
Job 30:30  
Jas 4:14

<sup>4</sup>My heart is smitten, and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread.

<sup>5</sup>By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin.

**102:5**  
Lam 4:8

<sup>6</sup>I am like a pelican of the wilderness: I am like an owl of the desert.

**102:7**  
Ps 77:4

<sup>7</sup>I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top.

<sup>8</sup>Mine enemies reproach me all the day; *and* they that are mad against me are sworn against me.

**102:8**  
2 Sam 16:5  
Isa 65:15  
Luke 23:11  
Acts 26:11

<sup>9</sup>For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping,

<sup>10</sup>Because of thine indignation and thy wrath: for thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down.

<sup>11</sup>My days *are* like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass.

<sup>12</sup>But thou, O LORD, shalt endure for ever; and thy remembrance unto all generations.

<sup>13</sup>Thou shalt arise, *and* have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come.

**102:12**  
Exod 3:15  
Lam 5:19

<sup>14</sup>For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof.

<sup>15</sup>So the heathen shall fear the name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth thy glory.

**102:13**  
Isa 60:10  
Zech 1:12

**102:15**  
1 Kgs 8:41-42

**101:1** *judgment:* justice. **101:2** *perfect:* blameless. **101:3** *cleave:* cling. **101:4** *froward:* perverse. **101:5** *privily:* secretly. *high:* haughty. *suffer:* endure. **101:7** *tarry:* continue. **102:2** *incline:* turn. **102:4** *smitten:* blighted. **102:5** *cleave:* cling. **102:6** *pelican:* vulture. **102:11** *a shadow that declineth:* an evening shadow. **102:15** *heathen:* nations.

**101:1ff** David may have written this psalm early in his reign as he set down the standards he wanted to follow. He knew that if he was to walk a blameless path he would need God's help (101:2). We can walk this blameless path if we avoid (1) looking at wickedness (101:3), (2) evil associates (101:4), (3) slander (101:5), and (4) pride (101:5). While avoiding the wrongs listed above, we must also let God's Word show us the standards by which to live.

**101:6** David said that his eyes would "be upon the faithful of the land." He would choose as models and as friends those who were godly and truthful. Our friends and associates can have a profound influence on us. Make sure to choose as your closest companions those who are faithful to God and his Word.

**102:3, 4** The writer felt so bad that he lost his appetite. When we face sickness and despair, our days pass blindly, and we don't care about even our basic needs. In these times, God alone is our comfort and strength. Even when we are too weak to fight, we can lean on him. It is often when we recognize our weaknesses that God's greatest strength becomes available.

**102:6, 7** These birds are pictures of loneliness and desolation. At times we may need to be alone, and solitude may comfort us. But we must be careful not to spurn those who reach out to us. Don't reject help and conversation. "Suffering silently" is neither Christian nor particularly healthy. Instead, accept graciously the support and help from family and friends.

<sup>16</sup>When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory.  
<sup>17</sup>He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.  
<sup>18</sup>This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the LORD.  
<sup>19</sup>For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the LORD behold the earth;  
<sup>20</sup>To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death;  
<sup>21</sup>To declare the name of the LORD in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem;  
<sup>22</sup>When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the LORD.  
<sup>23</sup>He weakened my strength in the way; he shortened my days.  
<sup>24</sup>I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: thy years *are* throughout all generations.  
<sup>25</sup>Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens *are* the work of thy hands.  
<sup>26</sup>They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed:  
<sup>27</sup>But thou *art* the same, and thy years shall have no end.  
<sup>28</sup>The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee.

**Theme:** God's great love for us. What God does for us tells us what he is really like.  
**Author:** David

## 103 A Psalm of David

<sup>1</sup>Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, *bless* his holy name.  
<sup>2</sup>Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:  
<sup>3</sup>Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;  
<sup>4</sup>Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;  
<sup>5</sup>Who satisfieth thy mouth with good *things*; so *that* thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.  
<sup>6</sup>The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.  
<sup>7</sup>He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.  
<sup>8</sup>The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.  
<sup>9</sup>He will not always chide: neither will he keep *his anger* for ever.  
<sup>10</sup>He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.  
<sup>11</sup>For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.  
<sup>12</sup>As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.  
<sup>13</sup>Like as a father pitieth *his* children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.

**102:26** wax: grow. a vesture: clothing. **103:9** chide: accuse.

**102:16**  
Isa 60:1-2  
**102:17**  
Neh 1:6  
**102:18**  
Deut 31:19  
1 Cor 10:11  
**102:19**  
Deut 26:15  
**102:21**  
Zech 8:20-23  
**102:22**  
Ps 86:9  
**102:24**  
Isa 38:10  
**102:25-27**  
Gen 1:1  
<sup>1</sup>Heb 1:10-12  
**102:26**  
Matt 24:35  
2 Pet 3:10  
Rev 20:11  
**102:27**  
Mal 3:6  
Jas 1:17  
**103:1**  
Pss 33:21; 104:1  
**103:3**  
Exod 34:7  
Jer 30:17  
**103:4**  
Ps 49:15  
**103:5**  
Isa 40:31  
**103:7**  
Exod 33:13  
**103:8**  
Num 14:18  
Neh 9:17  
Joel 2:13  
Jon 4:2  
Nah 1:3  
**103:9**  
Ps 30:5  
Isa 57:16  
Jer 3:5  
**103:10**  
Lam 3:22  
**103:11**  
Ps 36:5  
**103:12**  
Isa 38:17  
Heb 9:26  
**103:13**  
Mal 3:17

**102:16-22** Christ's future reign on earth will encompass two events mentioned in these verses. Jerusalem (Zion) will be restored, and the entire world will worship God (Revelation 11:15; 21:1-27).

**102:25-27** The writer of this psalm felt rejected and cast aside because of his great troubles (102:9, 10). Problems and heartaches can overwhelm us and cause us to feel that God has rejected us. But God our Creator is eternally with us and will keep all his promises, even though we may feel alone. Hebrews 1:10-12 quotes these verses to show that Jesus Christ, God's Son, was also present and active at the creation of the world.

**103:1ff** David's praise focused on the good things God was doing for him. It is easy to complain about life, but David's list gives us plenty for which to praise God—his forgiveness, healing, redemption, loving-kindness, tender mercies, providence, righteousness, justice, grace, patience. We receive all of these without deserving any of them. No matter how difficult your life's journey, you can always count your blessings—past, present, and future. When you feel as if you have nothing for which to praise God, read David's list.

**103:7** God's Law was given first to Moses and the people of Israel. God's Law presents a clear picture of God's character and

his will for his people. It was God's training manual to prepare his people to serve him and to follow his ways. Review the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) and the history of how they were given, asking God to show you his will through them.

**103:12** East and west can never meet. This is a symbolic portrait of God's forgiveness—when he forgives our sin, he separates it from us and doesn't even remember it. We need never wallow in the forgiven past, for God forgives and forgets. We tend to dredge up the ugly past, but God has wiped our record clean. If we are to follow God, we must model his forgiveness. When we forgive another, we must also forget the sin. Otherwise, we have not truly forgiven.

**103:13** God is like a father—tender and compassionate. Not every child has a tender and compassionate father, however. Too often, sadly, the cycles of abuse and dysfunction rob children of loving fathers. If that is your situation, God offers himself to you to be the Father you never had or perhaps felt you never needed. Of course, you can't "go fishing" with God or be held physically by him, but you can receive his love in your heart by means of his Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). God can tenderly heal your deep loss.

**103:14**  
Gen 3:19  
Ecd 12:7  
Isa 29:16

**103:15**  
Jas 1:10-11  
1 Pet 1:24

**103:18**  
Deut 7:9

**103:20**  
Matt 6:10  
Heb 1:14

<sup>14</sup>For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we *are* dust.

<sup>15</sup>As *for* man, his days *are* as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.

<sup>16</sup>For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.

<sup>17</sup>But the mercy of the LORD *is* from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children;

<sup>18</sup>To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.

<sup>19</sup>The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.

<sup>20</sup>Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.

<sup>21</sup>Bless ye the LORD, all *ye* his hosts; *ye* ministers of his, that do his pleasure.

<sup>22</sup>Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the LORD, O my soul.

**Theme:** Appreciating God through his creation. He not only creates, but maintains his creation. The Lord's care is the source of our joy.

**Author:** Anonymous

**104** <sup>1</sup>Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty.

<sup>2</sup>Who coverest *thyself* with light as *with* a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain:

<sup>3</sup>Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind:

<sup>4</sup>Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire:

<sup>5</sup>*Who* laid the foundations of the earth, *that* it should not be removed for ever.

**103:14** *our frame: how we are formed.*

**104:2**  
Dan 7:9

**104:3**  
Ps 18:10  
Amos 9:6

**104:4**  
2 Kgs 2:11; 6:17  
<sup>1</sup>Heb 1:7

**104:5**  
Job 38:4

## HOW GOD IS DESCRIBED IN PSALMS

Most of the psalms speak to God or about God. Because they were composed in a variety of situations, various facets of God's character are mentioned. Here is a sample of God's characteristics as understood and experienced by the psalm writers. As you read these psalms, ask yourself if this is the God you know.

*God is . . .*

All-knowing and ever present . . . . .	Psalm 139
Beautiful and desirable . . . . .	Psalms 27; 36; 45
Creator . . . . .	Psalms 8; 104; 148
Good and generous . . . . .	Psalms 34; 81; 107
Great and sovereign . . . . .	Psalms 33; 89; 96
Holy . . . . .	Psalms 66; 99; 145
Loving and faithful . . . . .	Psalms 23; 42; 51
Merciful and forgiving . . . . .	Psalms 32; 111; 130
Powerful . . . . .	Psalms 76; 89; 93
Willing to reveal his will, law, and direction . . . . .	Psalms 1; 19; 119
Righteous and just . . . . .	Psalms 71; 97; 113
Spirit . . . . .	Psalms 104; 139; 143

*References*

**103:13, 14** We are fragile, but God's care is eternal. Too often we focus on God as Judge and Lawgiver, ignoring his compassion and concern for us. When God examines our lives, he remembers our human condition. Our weakness should never be used as a justification for sin. His mercy takes everything into account. Trust him. God will deal with you compassionately.

**103:20-22** Everything everywhere is to bless the Lord: all angels—hosts (heavenly armies) and ministers—and all nature! To bless God is to praise him, remembering all he has done for us (103:2), fearing him and obeying his commands (103:17, 18), and serving him constantly (103:21). Is your life a blessing to the Lord?

**104:1ff** This psalm is a poetic summary of God's creation of the world as found in the first chapter of Genesis. What God created each day is mentioned by the writer as a reason to praise God. On

day one, God created light (104:1, 2; Genesis 1:3); day two, sky and water (104:2, 3; Genesis 1:6); day three, land and vegetation (104:6-18; Genesis 1:9-13); day four, the sun, moon, and stars (104:19-23; Genesis 1:14-16); day five, fish and birds (104:25, 26; Genesis 1:20-23); and on day six, animals, man, and food to sustain them (104:21-24, 27-30; Genesis 1:24-31). God's act of creation deserves the praise of all people.

**104:5** The world is built on God's foundations, and he guarantees its permanence. Even though one day the heavens and the earth will be destroyed (2 Peter 3:10), he will create a new heaven and a new earth that will last forever (Isaiah 65:17; Revelation 21:1). The same power that undergirds the world also provides a firm foundation for believers.

- 6 Thou coveredst it with the deep as *with* a garment: the waters stood above the mountains. **104:6**  
Gen 1:2
- 7 At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away. **104:7**  
Pss 18:15; 29:3
- 8 They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them. **104:9**  
Job 38:10-11  
Jer 5:22
- 9 Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth. **104:10**  
Isa 41:18
- 10 He sendeth the springs into the valleys, *which* run among the hills. **104:12**  
Matt 8:20
- 11 They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst. **104:14**  
Gen 1:29-30  
Job 28:5
- 12 By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, *which* sing among the branches. **104:15**  
Judg 9:13; 19:5, 8  
Prov 31:6  
Eccl 10:19  
Luke 7:46
- 13 He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works. **104:17**  
Lev 11:19
- 14 He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth; **104:18**  
Lev 11:5  
Prov 30:26
- 15 And wine *that* maketh glad the heart of man, *and* oil to make *his* face to shine, and bread *which* strengtheneth man's heart. **104:19**  
Gen 1:14
- 16 The trees of the LORD are full of *sap*; the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted; **104:20**  
Isa 45:7; 56:9
- 17 Where the birds make their nests: *as for* the stork, the fir trees *are* her house. **104:22**  
Job 37:8
- 18 The high hills *are* a refuge for the wild goats; *and* the rocks for the conies. **104:23**  
Gen 3:19
- 19 He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down. **104:24**  
Pss 40:5; 65:9  
Jer 10:12; 51:15
- 20 Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep *forth*. **104:26**  
Job 41:1
- 21 The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God. **104:27**  
Ps 136:25
- 22 The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens. **104:29**  
Gen 3:19
- 23 Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening. **104:30**  
Ezek 37:9
- 24 O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches. **104:31**  
Gen 1:31
- 25 *So is* this great and wide sea, wherein *are* things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. **104:32**  
Exod 19:18  
Judg 5:5
- 26 There go the ships: *there is* that leviathan, *whom* thou hast made to play therein. **104:35**  
Pss 37:10; 59:13
- 27 These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give *them* their meat in due season. **104:31**  
Gen 1:31
- 28 *That* thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good. **104:32**  
Exod 19:18  
Judg 5:5
- 29 Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust. **104:29**  
Gen 3:19
- 30 Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth. **104:30**  
Ezek 37:9
- 31 The glory of the LORD shall endure for ever: the LORD shall rejoice in his works. **104:31**  
Gen 1:31
- 32 He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills, and they smoke. **104:32**  
Exod 19:18  
Judg 5:5
- 33 I will sing unto the LORD as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. **104:35**  
Pss 37:10; 59:13
- 34 My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the LORD. **104:35**  
Pss 37:10; 59:13
- 35 Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless thou the LORD, O my soul. Praise ye the LORD. **104:35**  
Pss 37:10; 59:13

**Theme:** God's mighty deeds in bringing Israel to the Promised Land. Remembering his miracles encourages us to keep living close to him.

**Author:** David

**105** <sup>1</sup>O give thanks unto the LORD; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people. **105:1-15**  
#1 Chr 16:8-22

<sup>2</sup>Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works. **105:2**  
Ps 98:5

<sup>3</sup>Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD. **105:3**  
Ps 33:21

**104:12** *heaven:* air. *habitation:* place to nest. **104:18** *conies:* rock badgers. **104:21** *meat:* food. **104:24** *manifold:* many. **104:26** *that leviathan:* the whale.

**104:24** Creation is filled with stunning variety, revealing the rich creativity, goodness, and wisdom of our loving God. As you observe your natural surroundings, thank God for his creativity. Take a fresh look at people, seeing each one as his unique creation, each with his or her own special talents, abilities, and gifts.

**104:26** Here *leviathan* simply means a large and active sea creature.

**104:28-30** Psalm 105 expresses God's sovereignty in history; this psalm tells of his sovereignty over all creation. God has supreme, unlimited power over the entire universe. He creates;

he preserves; he governs. As we understand God's power, we realize that he is sufficient to handle our lives.

**104:29** Today many people are arrogant enough to think they don't need God. But our every breath depends on the life he has breathed into us (Genesis 2:7; 3:19; Job 33:4; 34:14, 15; Daniel 5:23). Not only do we depend on God for life, but he wants the best for us. We should also desire to learn more of his plans for us each day.

**105:1ff** The first 15 verses of this psalm are also found in 1 Chronicles 16:8-22, where they are sung as part of the celebration of David's bringing the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem.

**105:4**  
Ps 27:8

**105:7**  
Isa 26:9

**105:8**  
Gen 22:16-18  
Deut 7:9  
Luke 1:72

**105:10**  
Gen 28:13-15  
Josh 23:4

**105:11**  
Gen 13:15; 15:18

**105:12**  
Gen 34:30  
Heb 11:9

**105:14**  
Gen 12:17; 35:5

**105:16**  
Lev 26:26  
Isa 3:1  
Ezek 4:16

**105:17**  
Gen 37:28, 36  
Acts 7:9

**105:19**  
Ps 66:10

**105:20**  
Gen 41:14

**105:24**  
Exod 1:7, 9

**105:25**  
Exod 1:8  
Acts 7:19

**105:26**  
Exod 3:10  
Num 16:5

**105:27**  
Ps 78:43-51

**105:28**  
Exod 10:22

**105:29**  
Exod 7:20

**105:30**  
Exod 8:6

**105:31**  
Exod 8:16, 21

**105:32**  
Exod 9:23

<sup>4</sup>Seek the LORD, and his strength: seek his face evermore.

<sup>5</sup>Remember his marvellous works that he hath done; his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth;

<sup>6</sup>O ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen.

<sup>7</sup>He is the LORD our God: his judgments *are* in all the earth.

<sup>8</sup>He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word *which* he commanded to a thousand generations.

<sup>9</sup>Which *covenant* he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac;

<sup>10</sup>And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, *and* to Israel for an everlasting covenant:

<sup>11</sup>Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance:

<sup>12</sup>When they were *but* a few men in number; yea, very few, and strangers in it.

<sup>13</sup>When they went from one nation to another, from *one* kingdom to another people;

<sup>14</sup>He suffered no man to do them wrong; yea, he reprov'd kings for their sakes;

<sup>15</sup>*Saying*, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.

<sup>16</sup>Moreover he called for a famine upon the land: he brake the whole staff of bread.

<sup>17</sup>He sent a man before them, *even* Joseph, *who* was sold for a servant:

<sup>18</sup>Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron:

<sup>19</sup>Until the time that his word came: the word of the LORD tried him.

<sup>20</sup>The king sent and loosed him; *even* the ruler of the people, and let him go free.

<sup>21</sup>He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance:

<sup>22</sup>To bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom.

<sup>23</sup>Israel also came into Egypt; and Jacob sojourn'd in the land of Ham.

<sup>24</sup>And he increased his people greatly; and made them stronger than their enemies.

<sup>25</sup>He turned their heart to hate his people, to deal subtilly with his servants.

<sup>26</sup>He sent Moses his servant; *and* Aaron whom he had chosen.

<sup>27</sup>They shewed his signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham.

<sup>28</sup>He sent darkness, and made it dark; and they rebelled not against his word.

<sup>29</sup>He turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish.

<sup>30</sup>Their land brought forth frogs in abundance, in the chambers of their kings.

<sup>31</sup>He spake, and there came divers sorts of flies, *and* lice in all their coasts.

<sup>32</sup>He gave them hail for rain, *and* flaming fire in their land.

<sup>33</sup>He smote their vines also and their fig trees; and brake the trees of their coasts.

<sup>34</sup>He spake, and the locusts came, and caterpillars, and that without number,

<sup>35</sup>And did eat up all the herbs in their land, and devoured the fruit of their ground.

**105:14** *suffered*: allowed. **105:16** *whole staff of bread*: supply of food. **105:18** *letters*: shackles. **105:19** *tried*: tested. **105:21** *substance*: possessions. **105:22** *bind*: discipline. *senators*: elders. **105:23** *sojourned*: lived. **105:25** *subtilly*: craftily. **105:31** *divers sorts*: swarms. *coasts*: territory. **105:33** *smote*: struck.

## HISTORY IN THE BOOK OF PSALMS

For the original hearers, the historical psalms were vivid reminders of God's past acts on behalf of Israel. These history songs were written for passing on important lessons to succeeding generations. They celebrated the many promises God had made and faithfully kept; they also recounted the faithlessness of the people.

We cannot read this ancient history without reflecting on how consistently God's people failed to learn from the past. They repeatedly turned from fresh examples of God's faithfulness and forgiveness only to plunge back into sin. God can use these psalms to remind us how often we do exactly the same thing: Having every reason to live for God, we choose instead to live for everything but God. If we paid more attention to "his story" we wouldn't make so many mistakes in our own stories.

Selected historical psalms include 68, 78, 95, 105, 106, 111, 114, 135, 136, and 149.

Three other psalms are also hymns recounting Israel's history—78, 106, and 136.

**105:4, 5** If God seems far away, persist in your search for him. God rewards those who sincerely look for him (Hebrews 11:6). Jesus promised, "Seek, and ye shall find" (Matthew 7:7). The writer suggested a valuable way to search out God—become familiar with the way he has helped his people in the past. The Bible records the history of God's people. In searching its pages we will discover a loving God who is waiting for us to find him.

**105:6-11** The nation Israel, the people through whom God revealed his laws to mankind, is descended from Abraham. God chose Abraham and promised that his descendants would live in

the land of Canaan (now called Israel), and that they would be too numerous to count (Genesis 17:6-8). Abraham's son was Isaac; Isaac's son was Jacob. These three men are considered the patriarchs of Israel. God blessed them because of their faith (see Hebrews 11:8-21).

**105:23-25** Did God cause the Egyptians to hate the Hebrews? God is not the author of evil, but the Hebrew writers don't always distinguish between God's ultimate action and the intermediate steps. Thus, by God blessing the Israelites, the Egyptians came to hate them (Exodus 1:8-22). Because God caused the Israelites' blessing, he is also said to have caused the Egyptians' hatred. God used their animosity as a means to lead the Israelites out of Egypt.



36 He smote also all the firstborn in their land, the chief of all their strength.  
 37 He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and *there was* not one feeble *person* among their tribes.  
 38 Egypt was glad when they departed: for the fear of them fell upon them.  
 39 He spread a cloud for a covering; and fire to give light in the night.  
 40 *The people* asked, and he brought quails, and satisfied them with the bread of heaven.  
 41 He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out; they ran in the dry places *like* a river.  
 42 For he remembered his holy promise, *and* Abraham his servant.  
 43 And he brought forth his people with joy, *and* his chosen with gladness:  
 44 And gave them the lands of the heathen: and they inherited the labour of the people;  
 45 That they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws. Praise ye the LORD.

**105:36**  
Exod 12:29-30  
**105:37**  
Exod 12:33  
**105:39**  
Neh 9:12  
Isa 4:5  
**105:40**  
Num 11:31  
John 6:31  
**105:41**  
Exod 17:6  
Ps 78:15  
1 Cor 10:4  
**105:43**  
Exod 15:1  
**105:44**  
Josh 13:7  
**105:45**  
Deut 4:40

**Theme:** A song of national repentance as the people return from captivity. God patiently delivers us, in spite of our forgetfulness and self-willed rebellion.

**Author:** Anonymous

**106** <sup>1</sup>Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is* good: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

<sup>2</sup>Who can utter the mighty acts of the LORD? *who* can shew forth all his praise?

<sup>3</sup>Blessed *are* they that keep judgment, *and* he that doeth righteousness at all times.

<sup>4</sup>Remember me, O LORD, with the favour *that thou bearest* unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation;

<sup>5</sup>That I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance.

<sup>6</sup>We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly.

<sup>7</sup>Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked *him* at the sea, *even* at the Red sea.

<sup>8</sup>Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known.

<sup>9</sup>He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness.

<sup>10</sup>And he saved them from the hand of him that hated *them*, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.

<sup>11</sup>And the waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left.

<sup>12</sup>Then believed they his words; they sang his praise.

<sup>13</sup>They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel:

<sup>14</sup>But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert.

<sup>15</sup>And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.

<sup>16</sup>They envied Moses also in the camp, *and* Aaron the saint of the LORD.

<sup>17</sup>The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the company of Abiram.

<sup>18</sup>And a fire was kindled in their company; the flame burned up the wicked.

<sup>19</sup>They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image.

<sup>20</sup>Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass.

<sup>21</sup>They forgot God their saviour, which had done great things in Egypt;

<sup>22</sup>Wondrous works in the land of Ham, *and* terrible things by the Red sea.

**106:1**  
1 Chr 16:34, 41  
Pss 100:4-5; 105:1  
**106:3**  
Ps 15:2  
**106:4**  
Ps 44:3  
**106:5**  
Pss 1:3; 118:15  
**106:6**  
2 Chr 30:7  
Ezra 9:7  
Neh 1:7  
Zech 1:4  
**106:7**  
Judg 3:7  
**106:8**  
Ezek 20:9  
**106:9**  
Exod 14:21  
Isa 63:11-13  
**106:11**  
Exod 15:5  
**106:14**  
Num 11:4  
**106:16**  
Num 16:1-3  
**106:17**  
Deut 11:6  
**106:18**  
Num 16:35  
**106:19**  
Acts 7:41  
**106:20**  
Jer 2:11  
Rom 1:23  
**106:21**  
Deut 10:21

**105:44** *heathen*: nations. **106:3** *keep judgment*: maintain justice. **106:14** *tempted*: tested. **106:15** *leanness into their soul*: a wasting disease among them. **106:20** *similitude*: image. **106:22** *terrible*: awesome.

**105:45** God's purpose for saving the Israelites was that they would "observe his statutes, and keep his laws." Too often we use our lives and our freedom to please ourselves, but we should honor God. That is God's purpose for our lives and why he gave us his Word.

**106:1ff** While Psalm 105 is a summary of God's faithfulness, Psalm 106 is a summary of man's sinfulness. Psalm 105 covers events up to the Exodus from Egypt (Exodus 5—14), and Psalm 106 covers events from the Exodus up to what appears to be the Babylonian captivity (2 Kings 25).

**106:2** If we ever stopped to list all the mighty acts or miracles in the Bible, we would be astounded. They cover every aspect of life. The more we think about what God has done, the more we can appreciate the miracles he has done for us individually—birth,

personality development, loving friends and family, specific guidance, healing, salvation—the list goes on and on. If you think you have never seen a miracle, look closer—you will see God's power and loving intervention on your behalf. God still performs great miracles!

**106:13–15** In the wilderness, the Israelites were so intent on getting the food and water *they* wanted that they became blind to what God wanted. They were more concerned about immediate physical gratification than lasting spiritual satisfaction. They did not want what was best for them, and they refused to trust in God's care and provision (Numbers 11:18–33). If you complain enough, God may give you what you ask for, even if it is not the best for you. If you're not getting what you want, perhaps God knows it is not in your best interest. Trust in his care and provision.



**106:23**  
Exod 32:10-14

<sup>23</sup>Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy *them*.

**106:24**  
Jer 3:19

<sup>24</sup>Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not his word:

<sup>25</sup>But murmured in their tents, *and* hearkened not unto the voice of the LORD.

**106:26**  
Heb 3:11

<sup>26</sup>Therefore he lifted up his hand against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness:

<sup>27</sup>To overthrow their seed also among the nations, and to scatter them in the lands.

**106:28**  
Hos 9:10

<sup>28</sup>They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead.

<sup>29</sup>Thus they provoked *him* to anger with their inventions: and the plague brake in upon them.

**106:30**  
Num 25:7-13

<sup>30</sup>Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment: and so the plague was stayed.

<sup>31</sup>And that was counted unto him for righteousness unto all generations for evermore.

**106:32**  
Ps 78:40

<sup>32</sup>They angered *him* also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes:

<sup>33</sup>Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.

**106:34**  
Judg 1:21, 27-36

<sup>34</sup>They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the LORD commanded them:

<sup>35</sup>But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.

<sup>36</sup>And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them.

**106:37**  
2 Kgs 17:17

<sup>37</sup>Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils,

<sup>38</sup>And shed innocent blood, *even* the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood.

**106:39**  
Hos 4:12

<sup>39</sup>Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions.

**106:40**  
Judg 2:12-14

<sup>40</sup>Therefore was the wrath of the LORD kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance.

**106:41**  
Neh 9:27

<sup>41</sup>And he gave them into the hand of the heathen; and they that hated them ruled over them.

<sup>42</sup>Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand.

**106:43**  
Judg 6:6  
Ps 81:12

<sup>43</sup>Many times did he deliver them; but they provoked *him* with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity.

<sup>44</sup>Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry:

**106:45**  
Lev 26:42

<sup>45</sup>And he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies.

**106:46**  
2 Chr 30:9  
Ezra 9:9

<sup>46</sup>He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives.

<sup>47</sup>Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy holy name, *and* to triumph in thy praise.

**106:47-48**  
/1 Chr 16:34-36

<sup>48</sup>Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the LORD.

**106:29** inventions: wicked deeds. **106:30** stayed: stopped. **106:33** unadvisedly: rashly. **106:35** heathen: nations. their works: to do as they did. **106:37** devils: demons. **106:45** repented: relented.

**106:23** Moses served as the people's intercessor. This refers to the time when the Lord wanted to destroy the people for worshipping the gold calf (Exodus 32:7-14).

**106:34-39** Israel constantly turned from their Provider and Protector. How, after the great miracles they saw, could they turn from God and worship the idols of the land? We also have seen God's great miracles, but sometimes find ourselves enticed by the world's gods—power, convenience, fame, sex, and pleasure. As Israel forgot God, so we are susceptible to forgetting him and being defiled by an evil world. Remember all that God has done for you so you won't be drawn away from him by the world's "pleasures."

**106:40-42** God allowed trouble to come to the Israelites in order to help them. Our troubles can be helpful because they (1) humble us, (2) wean us from the allurements of the world and drive us back to God, (3) vitalize our prayers, (4) allow us to experience more of God's faithfulness, (5) make us more dependent upon God, (6) encourage us to submit to God's purpose for our lives, and (7) make us more compassionate toward others in trouble.

**106:44-46** This is a beautiful picture of God's graciousness toward his people who deserved only judgment. Fortunately, God's faithfulness to us is not limited by our faithfulness to him. God was gracious to us in sending his Son to die for our sins. If he did this while we were yet sinners, how much more gracious will he be now that we are his children?

**E. THE FIFTH BOOK OF PSALMS (107:1—150:6)**

These psalms praise God's works, recount the blessings of righteous living, thank God for deliverance, and praise God for his wonderful Word. These psalms remind us that the most perfect sacrifice we can offer to God is a faithful and obedient life.

**Theme:** Thankfulness to God should constantly be on the lips of those whom he has saved. This psalm was written to celebrate the Jews' return from their exile in Babylon.

**Author:** Anonymous

**107**<sup>1</sup>O give thanks unto the LORD, for *he* is good: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.  
<sup>2</sup>Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;

<sup>3</sup>And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.

<sup>4</sup>They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in.

<sup>5</sup>Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.

<sup>6</sup>Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, *and* he delivered them out of their distresses.

<sup>7</sup>And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.

<sup>8</sup>Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men!

<sup>9</sup>For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

<sup>10</sup>Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, *being* bound in affliction and iron;

<sup>11</sup>Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High:

<sup>12</sup>Therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and *there was* none to help.

<sup>13</sup>Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, *and* he saved them out of their distresses.

<sup>14</sup>He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder.

<sup>15</sup>Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men!

<sup>16</sup>For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder.

<sup>17</sup>Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.

<sup>18</sup>Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death.

<sup>19</sup>Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, *and* he saveth them out of their distresses.

<sup>20</sup>He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered *them* from their destructions.

<sup>21</sup>Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men!

<sup>22</sup>And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.

**107:7** the right way: a straight way, of habitation: they could dwell in. **107:11** contemned: despised. **107:12** labour: hard labor. **107:14** bands in sunder: chains apart. **107:16** brass: bronze. **107:18** abhorreth all manner of meat: loathed any kind of food.

**107:1**

Ps 106:1

**107:2**

Isa 35:9-10

**107:3**

Neh 1:9

Ps 106:47

Ezek 20:34

**107:4**

Josh 5:6

**107:7**

Jer 31:9

**107:9**

Matt 5:6

Luke 1:53

**107:10**

Mic 7:8-9

Luke 1:79

**107:11**

Num 15:31

**107:14**

Ps 116:16

Acts 12:7

**107:16**

Isa 45:1-2

**107:17**

Isa 65:6-7

Ezek 24:23

**107:18**

Job 33:19-22

Pss 9:13; 88:3

**107:20**

2 Kgs 20:5

Matt 8:8

**107:22**

Lev 7:12

Pss 9:11; 50:14;

73:28; 118:17

**107:1ff** This psalm speaks of four different types of people in distress and how God rescues them: wanderers (107:4–9), prisoners (107:10–16), the sick (107:17–20), and the storm-tossed (107:23–30). No matter how extreme our calamity, God is able to help us. He is loving and kind to those who are distressed.

**107:1, 2** God has done so much for us, and we have so much for which to thank him (see Psalm 103). He wants us to proclaim to everyone all that he has done. This verse is not so much a mandate to witness as a declaration of the fact that those who truly live in God's presence will not be able to keep this glorious experience to themselves (see also Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 5:18–20). What has God done for you? Is there someone you can tell?

**107:4–9** Lost, hungry, thirsty, and exhausted, these wanderers typify the Israelites in exile. But they also typify anyone who has not found the satisfaction that comes from knowing God. Anyone who recognizes his or her own loss can receive the offer of Jesus to satisfy these needs. Jesus is the Way (John 14:6), the Bread of life (John 6:33, 35), the Water of life (John 4:10–14), and the Giver of rest (Matthew 11:28–30). Have you received his life-giving offer?

**107:10–16** Do you know anyone who is in prison? Most people think that those in prison deserve whatever misery they experience as punishment for their crimes. But God loves all men and women no matter how far they have fallen. He wants to reach them with his love and dispel the gloom they face (Matthew 25:34–46). Throughout the world, people are imprisoned for their faith; others suffer as victims of injustice. Can you reach out to them? Pray for those in prison. Pray for ministries and Christian chaplains who take God's message of love and forgiveness to prisoners. What can you do to support these efforts?

**107:17–20** Fools and rebels surely bring trouble upon themselves. This psalm offers hope for those who have made a mess of their lives. By receiving God's free gift of forgiveness (Micah 7:18–20; 1 John 1:9), anyone can begin a new life and break with the past (see Romans 3:23–26; 2 Corinthians 5:17). By faith in Christ, we can break addictions, heal memories, and restore broken relationships. If we ask Christ to take control of our lives, he will answer us. His love reaches even those who have rebelled against him.

23 They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters;

24 These see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep.

107:25  
Ps 93:3-4

25 For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof.

26 They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble.

27 They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end.

28 Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses.

107:29  
Matt 8:26  
Luke 8:24

29 He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.

30 Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.

31 Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men!

32 Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders.

107:32  
Ps 22:22, 25  
Isa 25:1

33 He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the watersprings into dry ground;

34 A fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.

107:34  
Gen 19:24-25

35 He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into watersprings.

107:35  
Isa 35:6-7; 41:18

36 And there he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation;

107:37  
2 Kgs 19:29  
Amos 9:14

37 And sow the fields, and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of increase.

38 He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly; and suffereth not their cattle to decrease.

39 Again, they are minished and brought low through oppression, affliction, and sorrow.

107:38  
Gen 12:2  
Exod 1:7

40 He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness, *where there is no way.*

107:42  
Job 22:19  
Ps 52:6  
Rom 3:19

41 Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction, and maketh *him* families like a flock.

42 The righteous shall see *it*, and rejoice: and all iniquity shall stop her mouth.

107:43  
Ps 64:9  
Jer 9:12  
Hos 14:9

43 Whoso *is* wise, and will observe these *things*, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the LORD.

**Theme:** Victory in God's strength. With God's help, we can do more than we think.

**Author:** David

## 108 *A Song or Psalm of David*

108:1-5  
/Ps 57:7-11

1 O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory.

2 Awake, psaltery and harp: I *myself* will awake early.

3 I will praise thee, O LORD, among the people: and I will sing praises unto thee among the nations.

108:4  
Ps 113:4

4 For thy mercy *is* great above the heavens: and thy truth *reacheth* unto the clouds.

5 Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: and thy glory above all the earth;

108:6-13  
/Ps 60:5-12

6 That thy beloved may be delivered: save *with* thy right hand, and answer me.

7 God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.

8 Gilead *is* mine; Manasseh *is* mine; Ephraim also *is* the strength of mine head; Judah *is* my lawgiver;

9 Moab *is* my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe; over Philistia will I triumph.

10 Who will bring me into the strong city? who will lead me into Edom?

108:11  
Ps 44:9

11 *Wilt not thou*, O God, *who* hast cast us off? and wilt not thou, O God, go forth with our hosts?

12 Give us help from trouble: for vain *is* the help of man.

13 Through God we shall do valiantly: for he *it is that* shall tread down our enemies.

107:36 *for habitation:* where they could live. 107:38 *suffereth not:* does not let. 107:39 *minished:* diminished.  
108:1 *fixed:* steadfast. 108:2 *psaltery:* lyre. 108:7 *mete:* measure. 108:12 *vain:* worthless.

**107:32** Those who have never truly suffered may not appreciate God as much as those who have matured under hardship. Those who have seen God work in times of distress have a deeper insight into his loving-kindness. If you have experienced great trials, you have the potential for great praise.

**108:1ff** The conclusions from two previous psalms have been put together to make this psalm. The first five verses are quoted from Psalm 57:7-11, and the next eight verses (108:6-13) are from Psalm 60:5-12.

**108:9** Moab, Edom, and Philistia were Israel's enemies to the east, south, and west respectively. They despised the Israelites and Israel's God.

**108:13** Do your prayers end with requests for help to make it through stressful situations? David prayed not merely for rescue, but for victory. With God's help we can claim more than just survival, we can claim victory! Look for ways God can use your distress as an opportunity to show his mighty power.

**Theme:** Righteous indignation against liars and slanderers. We can tell God our true feelings and desires.

**Author:** David

## 109 *To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David*

<sup>1</sup>Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise;

<sup>2</sup>For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me: they have spoken against me with a lying tongue.

<sup>3</sup>They compassed me about also with words of hatred; and fought against me without a cause.

<sup>4</sup>For my love they are my adversaries: but I *give myself unto* prayer.

<sup>5</sup>And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love.

<sup>6</sup>Set thou a wicked man over him: and let Satan stand at his right hand.

<sup>7</sup>When he shall be judged, let him be condemned: and let his prayer become sin.

<sup>8</sup>Let his days be few; *and* let another take his office.

<sup>9</sup>Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow.

<sup>10</sup>Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg: let them seek *their bread* also out of their desolate places.

<sup>11</sup>Let the extortioner catch all that he hath; and let the strangers spoil his labour.

<sup>12</sup>Let there be none to extend mercy unto him: neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children.

<sup>13</sup>Let his posterity be cut off; *and* in the generation following let their name be blotted out.

<sup>14</sup>Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the LORD; and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out.

<sup>15</sup>Let them be before the LORD continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth.

<sup>16</sup>Because that he remembered not to shew mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart.

<sup>17</sup>As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him: as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him.

<sup>18</sup>As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones.

<sup>19</sup>Let it be unto him as the garment *which* covereth him, and for a girdle wherewith he is girded continually.

<sup>20</sup>*Let this be* the reward of mine adversaries from the LORD, and of them that speak evil against my soul.

<sup>21</sup>But do thou for me, O GOD the Lord, for thy name's sake: because thy mercy *is* good, deliver thou me.

<sup>22</sup>For I *am* poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me.

<sup>23</sup>I am gone like the shadow when it declineth: I am tossed up and down as the locust.

<sup>24</sup>My knees are weak through fasting; and my flesh faileth of fatness.

<sup>25</sup>I became also a reproach unto them: *when* they looked upon me they shook their heads.

<sup>26</sup>Help me, O LORD my God: O save me according to thy mercy:

<sup>27</sup>That they may know that this *is* thy hand; *that* thou, LORD, hast done it.

<sup>28</sup>Let them curse, but bless thou: when they arise, let them be ashamed; but let thy servant rejoice.

**109:3** *compassed:* surrounded. **109:8** *take his office:* replace him. **109:11** *extortioner:* creditor. *spoil:* plunder.

**109:18** *bowels:* body. **109:19** *girdle:* belt. **109:23** *the shadow when it declineth:* an evening shadow.

**109:24** *flesh faileth of fatness:* body is thin and gaunt.

**109:1**  
Ps 83:1

**109:2**  
Pss 52:4; 120:2

**109:3**  
Ps 69:4

**109:4**  
Ps 38:20

**109:5**  
John 7:7

**109:6**  
Zech 3:1

**109:7**  
Prov 28:9

**109:8**  
<sup>1</sup>Acts 1:20

**109:9**  
Exod 22:24

**109:11**  
Isa 1:7

**109:12**  
Isa 9:17

**109:14**  
Neh 4:5  
Isa 65:6-7

**109:15**  
Jer 16:17

**109:16**  
Ps 37:32

**109:17**  
Matt 7:2

**109:18**  
Ps 73:6

**109:19**  
Ezek 7:27

**109:20**  
Isa 3:11  
2 Tim 4:14

**109:21**  
Ps 25:11  
Ezek 36:22

**109:22**  
Ps 40:17  
Prov 18:14

**109:24**  
Heb 12:12

**109:26**  
Ps 119:86

**109:28**  
2 Sam 16:11-12

**109:1ff** David endured many false accusations (1 Samuel 22:7-13; 2 Samuel 15:3, 4), as did Christ centuries later (Matthew 26:59-61; 27:39-44). Verse 8 is quoted in Acts 1:20 as fulfilled by Judas's death.

**109:4** David was angry at being attacked by evil people who slandered him and lied. Yet he said he loved his enemies and prayed for them. While we must hate evil and work to overcome

it, we must love everyone, including those who do evil, because God loves them. We are called to hate the sin, but love the person. Only through God's strength will we be able to follow David's example.

**109:6-20** This is another of the imprecatory psalms, a call for God to judge the wicked. (For an explanation of imprecatory psalms, see the note on 35:1ff.) David was not taking vengeance into his own hands, but was asking that God be swift in his promised judgment of evil people. David's words depict the eventual doom of all God's enemies.

**109:29**  
Job 8:22  
Ps 35:26

**109:30**  
Ps 35:18

**109:31**  
Pss 16:8; 37:33

<sup>29</sup>Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame, and let them cover themselves with their own confusion, as with a mantle.

<sup>30</sup>I will greatly praise the LORD with my mouth; yea, I will praise him among the multitude.

<sup>31</sup>For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save *him* from those that condemn his soul.

**Theme:** The credentials for the Messiah. Jesus is the Messiah.

**Author:** David

## 110 *A Psalm of David*

**110:1**  
<sup>1</sup>Matt 22:44  
<sup>1</sup>Mark 12:36; 14:62  
<sup>1</sup>Luke 20:42  
<sup>1</sup>Acts 2:34  
<sup>1</sup>Heb 1:13

**110:2**  
Ps 45:6  
Dan 7:13-14

**110:3**  
Judg 5:2  
Ps 96:9

**110:4**  
<sup>1</sup>Heb 5:6; 7:17, 21

**110:5**  
Pss 2:5, 12; 16:8  
Rom 2:5  
Rev 6:17

<sup>1</sup>The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

<sup>2</sup>The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.

<sup>3</sup>Thy people *shall be* willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.

<sup>4</sup>The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

<sup>5</sup>The LORD at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.

<sup>6</sup>He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill *the places* with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.

<sup>7</sup>He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head.

**Theme:** All that God does is good. Reverence for God is the beginning of wisdom.

**Author:** Anonymous

**111:1**  
Ps 138:1

**111:2**  
Ps 92:5

**111:3**  
Pss 96:6; 145:5

**111:4**  
Pss 86:15; 103:8

**111:5**  
Matt 6:31-33

**111:7**  
Ps 19:7-9  
Rev 15:3-4

**111:8**  
Isa 40:8  
Matt 5:18

**111:9**  
Ps 99:3  
Luke 1:68

**111** <sup>1</sup>Praise ye the LORD. I will praise the LORD with *my* whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and *in* the congregation.

<sup>2</sup>The works of the LORD *are* great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.

<sup>3</sup>His work *is* honourable and glorious: and his righteousness endureth for ever.

<sup>4</sup>He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the LORD *is* gracious and full of compassion.

<sup>5</sup>He hath given meat unto them that fear him: he will ever be mindful of his covenant.

<sup>6</sup>He hath shewed his people the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the heathen.

<sup>7</sup>The works of his hands *are* verity and judgment; all his commandments *are* sure.

<sup>8</sup>They stand fast for ever and ever, *and are* done in truth and uprightness.

<sup>9</sup>He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend *is* his name.

**109:29** *confusion:* disgrace. *mantle:* cloak. **110:6** *heathen:* nations. *wound the heads over:* crush the rulers of. **111:5** *meat:* food. **111:6** *heathen:* nations. **111:7** *verity:* truth. *judgment:* justice. **111:9** *reverend:* awesome.

**110:1ff** This is one of the most quoted psalms in the New Testament because of its clear references to the Messiah. In Matthew 22:41–45, Jesus recited the words of verse 1 and applied them to himself. Verses 1 and 6 look forward to Christ's final and total destruction of the wicked (Revelation 6–9); 110:2 prophesies Christ's reign on the earth (Revelation 20:1–7); 110:3, 4 tell of Christ's priestly work for his people (Hebrews 5–8); and 110:5, 6 look forward to the final battle on earth when Christ will overcome the forces of evil (Revelation 19:11–21).

**110:1–7** Many people have a vague belief in God, but refuse to accept Jesus as anything more than a great human teacher. But the Bible does not allow that option. Both the Old and New Testaments proclaim the deity of the One who came to save and to reign. Jesus pointed out that this psalm spoke of the Messiah as greater than David, Israel's greatest king (Mark 12:35–37). Peter used this psalm to show that Jesus, the Messiah, sits at God's right hand and is Lord over all (Acts 2:32–35). You can't straddle the fence, calling Jesus "just a good teacher," because the Bible clearly calls him Messiah and Lord.

**110:4** For more about Melchizedek, see his Profile in Genesis 15, p. 27. As a priest like Melchizedek, Christ will never abuse his divine position, and his reign will be forever. Jesus is more fully described as our High Priest in Hebrews 5.

**111–118** Psalms 111–118 are called hallelujah psalms. "Hallelujah" means "praise the LORD" and expresses the uplifting and optimistic tone of these songs.

**111:9** The redemption here is the rescue by God of the Israelites from Egypt and the future return from the captivity in Babylon (see Deuteronomy 7:8; Jeremiah 31:11). *Redemption* means recovery of something or someone upon payment of a ransom. Mankind was being held in slavery by sin, until Jesus paid the price to free us—giving his life as a perfect sacrifice. Before Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice for sin, people were not permitted into God's presence (the Most Holy Place); now, all believers can freely approach God's throne through prayer and have the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

<sup>10</sup>The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do *his commandments*: his praise endureth for ever. **111:10**  
Prov 1:7, 9; 3:4-5; 9:10

**Theme:** The advantages of having faith in God. God guards the minds and actions of those who follow his commands.

**Author:** Anonymous

**112** <sup>1</sup>Praise ye the LORD. Blessed is the man *that* feareth the LORD, *that* delighteth greatly in his commandments.

<sup>2</sup>His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed.

<sup>3</sup>Wealth and riches *shall be* in his house: and his righteousness endureth for ever.

<sup>4</sup>Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: *he is* gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.

<sup>5</sup>A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion.

<sup>6</sup>Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.

<sup>7</sup>He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD.

<sup>8</sup>His heart is established, he shall not be afraid, until he see *his desire* upon his enemies.

<sup>9</sup>He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour.

<sup>10</sup>The wicked shall see *it*, and be grieved; he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away: the desire of the wicked shall perish.

**Theme:** The scope of God's care. God's great mercy is demonstrated by his concern for the poor and the oppressed.

**Author:** Anonymous

**113** <sup>1</sup>Praise ye the LORD. Praise, O ye servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD. <sup>2</sup>Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time forth and for evermore.

<sup>3</sup>From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the LORD's name is to be praised.

<sup>4</sup>The LORD is high above all nations, *and* his glory above the heavens.

<sup>5</sup>Who is like unto the LORD our God, who dwelleth on high,

<sup>6</sup>Who humbleth *himself* to behold *the things that are* in heaven, and in the earth!

<sup>7</sup>He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, *and* lifteth the needy out of the dunghill;

<sup>8</sup>That he may set *him* with princes, *even* with the princes of his people.

<sup>9</sup>He maketh the barren woman to keep house, *and to be* a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the LORD.

**Theme:** The mighty God who delivered Israel from Egypt. We can celebrate God's great work in our lives.

**Author:** Anonymous

**114** <sup>1</sup>When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language;

<sup>2</sup>Judah was his sanctuary, *and* Israel his dominion.

**112:7** *fixed*: steadfast. **112:9** *dispersed*: scattered. **113:9** *keep house*: have a home. **114:1** *strange*: foreign.

**112:1**  
Ps 119:16

**112:2**  
Ps 25:13

**112:3**  
Prov 3:16-17; 8:18

**112:4**  
Job 11:17  
Ps 97:11

**112:5**  
Ps 37:21, 26

**112:6**  
Pss 15:5; 55:22

**112:7**  
Ps 56:4

**112:8**  
Ps 56:10-11

**112:9**  
Ps 148:14  
2 Cor 9:9

**112:10**  
Matt 8:12  
Luke 13:28

**113:1**  
Ps 135:1

**113:2**  
Dan 2:20

**113:3**  
Ps 50:1

**113:4**  
Pss 8:1; 97:9; 99:2

**113:5**  
Pss 89:6; 103:19

**113:6**  
Ps 11:4  
Isa 57:15

**113:7**  
1 Sam 2:8

**113:8**  
Job 36:7

**113:9**  
1 Sam 2:5  
Ps 68:6  
Isa 54:1

**114:1**  
Exod 13:3

**114:2**  
Exod 19:6; 29:45-46  
Ps 78:68-69

**111:10** The only way to become truly wise is to fear (reverence) God. This same thought is expressed in Proverbs 1:7-9. Too often people want to skip this step, thinking they can become wise by life experience and academic knowledge alone. But if we do not acknowledge God as the source of wisdom, then our foundation for making wise decisions is shaky, and we are doomed to mistakes and foolish choices. Always remember that the foundation for wisdom is to recognize that God is the source of wisdom and that to obey his laws is the path to wisdom.

**112:1** Many blessings are available to us—honor, prosperity, security, freedom from fear (112:2-9)—if we *fear* the Lord, and *delight* in obeying his commands. If you expect God's blessings, you must revere him and gladly obey him.

**112:5** Generosity can cure two problems that having money can create. The rich man may abuse others in his desire to accumulate wealth. Generosity will eliminate that abuse. Also, the fear

of losing money can be a snare. Generosity shows that we have placed our trust in God, not in our money, for justice and security.

**112:7, 8** We all want to live without fear; our heroes are fearless people who take on all dangers and overcome them. The writer teaches us that *fear* of God can lead to a *fearless* life. To fear God means to respect and reverence him as the almighty Lord. When we trust God completely to take care of us, we will find that our other fears—even of death itself—will subside.

**113:5-9** In God's eyes, a person's value has no relationship to his or her wealth or position on the social ladder. Many people who have excelled in God's work began in poverty or humble beginnings. God supersedes the social orders of this world, often choosing his future leaders and ambassadors from among social outcasts. Do you treat the unwanted in society as though they have value? Demonstrate by your actions that all people are valuable and useful in God's eyes.



**114:3**  
Exod 14:21  
Josh 3:13-14, 16

**114:4**  
Ps 29:5-6  
Hab 3:6

**114:5**  
Hab 3:8

**114:7**  
Ps 96:9

**114:8**  
Exod 17:5-6  
Deut 8:15

**115:1**  
Ps 29:2  
Isa 48:11  
Ezek 36:22, 32

**115:2**  
Pss 42:3; 79:10

**115:3**  
Pss 103:19; 135:6  
Dan 4:35

**115:4-11**  
/Ps 135:15-20

**115:5**  
Jer 10:5

**115:8**  
Ps 135:18

**115:9**  
Pss 33:20; 62:8

**115:11**  
Pss 103:11; 135:20

**115:12**  
Ps 98:3

**115:13**  
Ps 128:1, 4

**115:14**  
Deut 1:11

**115:15**  
Gen 1:1; 14:19

**115:16**  
Pss 8:6; 89:11

**115:17**  
Pss 6:5; 31:17

**115:18**  
Ps 113:2

**116:1**  
Pss 18:1; 66:19  
**116:2**  
Pss 17:6; 31:2

<sup>3</sup>The sea saw *it*, and fled: Jordan was driven back.

<sup>4</sup>The mountains skipped like rams, *and* the little hills like lambs.

<sup>5</sup>What *ailed* thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, *that* thou wast driven back?

<sup>6</sup>Ye mountains, *that* ye skipped like rams; *and* ye little hills, like lambs?

<sup>7</sup>Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the God of Jacob;

<sup>8</sup>Which turned the rock *into* a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters.

**Theme:** God is alive. He is thinking about us and caring for us, and we should put him first in our lives.

**Author:** Anonymous

**115** <sup>1</sup>Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, *and* for thy truth's sake.

<sup>2</sup>Wherefore should the heathen say, Where *is* now their God?

<sup>3</sup>But our God *is* in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.

<sup>4</sup>Their idols *are* silver and gold, the work of men's hands.

<sup>5</sup>They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not:

<sup>6</sup>They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not:

<sup>7</sup>They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat.

<sup>8</sup>They that make them are like unto them; *so is* every one that trusteth in them.

<sup>9</sup>O Israel, trust thou in the LORD: he *is* their help and their shield.

<sup>10</sup>O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD: he *is* their help and their shield.

<sup>11</sup>Ye that fear the LORD, trust in the LORD: he *is* their help and their shield.

<sup>12</sup>The LORD hath been mindful of us: he will bless *us*; he will bless the house of Israel; he will bless the house of Aaron.

<sup>13</sup>He will bless them that fear the LORD, *both* small and great.

<sup>14</sup>The LORD shall increase you more and more, you and your children.

<sup>15</sup>Ye *are* blessed of the LORD which made heaven and earth.

<sup>16</sup>The heaven, *even* the heavens, *are* the LORD's: but the earth hath he given to the children of men.

<sup>17</sup>The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence.

<sup>18</sup>But we will bless the LORD from this time forth and for evermore. Praise the LORD.

**Theme:** Praise for being saved from certain death. Worship is a thankful response and not a repayment for what God has done.

**Author:** Anonymous

**116** <sup>1</sup>I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice *and* my supplications.  
<sup>2</sup>Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon *him* as long as I live.

**114:8** *standing:* pool of. **115:2** *heathen:* nations. **116:1** *supplications:* cries for mercy. **116:2** *inclined:* turned.

**114:7** When God gave the Law at Mount Sinai, there was an earthquake (Exodus 19:18). The mountain trembled in God's presence. Even with our great technology, the seas, rivers, and mountains still present us with formidable challenges. But to God, who controls nature, they are as nothing. When observing the power of an ocean wave or the majesty of a mountain peak, think of God's greatness and glory, which are far more awesome than the natural wonders you can see. To tremble at God's presence means to recognize God's complete power and authority and our frailty by comparison.

**115—118** Psalms 115—118 are traditionally sung at the Passover meal, commemorating Israel's escape from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 11—12).

**115:1** The writer asked that God's name, not the nation's, be glorified. Too often we ask God to glorify his name *with* ours. For example, we may pray for help to do a good job so that our work will be noticed. Or we may ask that a presentation go well so we will get applause. There is nothing wrong with looking good or impressing others; the problem comes when we want to look good no matter what happens to God's reputation in the process. Before you pray, ask yourself, "Who will get the credit, if God answers my prayer?"

**115:4-8** When the psalms were written, many people worshiped idols—statues of wood, stone, or metal. They took pride in what they could see and had contempt for what they couldn't see. Today, we still may put more value in tangible objects (home, clothing, possessions) than in intangible things (spiritual growth, salvation, giving to those in need, spending time with loved ones). Those who give their whole lives to obtaining tangible objects are as foolish and empty as the idols themselves. (For more on the foolishness of idols, see Isaiah 44:9-20.)

**115:12** "The LORD hath been mindful of us" says the psalm writer. What a fantastic truth! There are many times when we feel isolated, alone, and abandoned, even by God. In reality, he sees, understands, and thinks about us. When depressed by problems or struggling with self-worth, be encouraged that God keeps you in his thoughts. If he thinks about you, surely his help is near.

**116:1, 2** God is so responsive that you can always reach him. He bends down and listens to your prayers. This writer's love for the Lord had grown because he had experienced answers to his prayers. If you are discouraged, remember that God is near, listening carefully to every prayer, and answering each prayer in order to give you his best.

- <sup>3</sup>The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.
- <sup>4</sup>Then called I upon the name of the LORD; O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.
- <sup>5</sup>Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful.
- <sup>6</sup>The LORD preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me.
- <sup>7</sup>Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.
- <sup>8</sup>For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, *and* my feet from falling.
- <sup>9</sup>I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living.
- <sup>10</sup>I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted:
- <sup>11</sup>I said in my haste, All men *are* liars.
- <sup>12</sup>What shall I render unto the LORD *for* all his benefits toward me?
- <sup>13</sup>I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD.
- <sup>14</sup>I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people.
- <sup>15</sup>Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.
- <sup>16</sup>O LORD, truly I *am* thy servant; I *am* thy servant, *and* the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds.
- <sup>17</sup>I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD.
- <sup>18</sup>I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people,
- <sup>19</sup>In the courts of the LORD's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD.

**116:3**  
Ps 18:4-6

**116:4**  
Pss 22:20; 118:5

**116:5**  
Exod 34:6

**116:6**  
Ps 142:6

**116:7**  
Ps 13:6  
Matt 11:29

**116:8**  
Pss 49:15; 56:13

**116:10**  
<sup>12</sup>Cor 4:13

**116:12**  
2 Chr 32:25  
1 Thes 3:9

**116:14**  
Pss 22:25; 50:14

**116:15**  
Ps 72:14

**Theme:** Another reason for praise—God's love for the whole world. We should praise God for his unlimited love.

**Author:** Anonymous

- 117** <sup>1</sup>O Praise the LORD, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people.
- <sup>2</sup>For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the LORD *endureth* for ever. Praise ye the LORD.

**117:1**  
<sup>1</sup>Rom 15:11

**117:2**  
Ps 100:5

**Theme:** Confidence in God's eternal love. God's love is unchanging in the midst of changing situations. This gives us security.

**Author:** Anonymous

- 118** <sup>1</sup>O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is* good: because his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- <sup>2</sup>Let Israel now say, that his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- <sup>3</sup>Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- <sup>4</sup>Let them now that fear the LORD say, that his mercy *endureth* for ever.
- <sup>5</sup>I called upon the LORD in distress: the LORD answered me, *and set me* in a large place.
- <sup>6</sup>The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?
- <sup>7</sup>The LORD taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see *my desire* upon them that hate me.
- <sup>8</sup>*It is* better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.
- <sup>9</sup>*It is* better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes.
- <sup>10</sup>All nations compassed me about: but in the name of the LORD will I destroy them.
- <sup>11</sup>They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about: but in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.
- <sup>12</sup>They compassed me about like bees; they are quenched as the fire of thorns: for in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.
- <sup>13</sup>Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall: but the LORD helped me.

**118:1**  
Ps 136:1-26

**118:2**  
Ps 115:9

**118:5**  
Pss 18:19; 120:1

**118:6**  
Job 19:27  
<sup>1</sup>Heb 13:6

**118:7**  
Ps 54:7

**118:8**  
2 Chr 32:7-8  
Isa 57:13

**118:10**  
Ps 18:40

**118:12**  
Deut 1:44

**116:16** *loosed my bonds*: freed me from my chains. **118:5** *in a large place*: free. **118:10** *compassed*: surrounded. **118:13** *thrust sore*: pushed hard.

**116:15** God stays close to us even in death. When someone we love is nearing death, we may become angry and feel abandoned. But believers are precious to God, and he carefully chooses the time when they are to be called into his presence. Let this truth provide comfort when you've lost a loved one. God notices, and each life is valuable to him (see Jesus' statement in Matthew 10:29).

**117:1, 2** Psalm 117 is not only the shortest chapter in the Bible, but it is also the middle chapter. Paul quotes from it in Romans 15:11 to show that God's salvation is for *all* people, not just the Jews.

**117:1, 2** Have you ever said, "I can't think of anything God has done for me. How can I praise him?" This psalm gives two reasons for praising God: He is merciful, and his truth endures forever. If he did nothing else for us our whole lives, he would still be worthy of our highest praise.

**118:8** Pilots put confidence in their planes. Commuters place confidence in trains, cars, or buses. Each day we must put our confidence in something or someone. If you are willing to trust a plane or car to get you to your destination, are you willing to trust God to guide you here on earth and to your eternal destination? Do you trust him more than any human being? How futile it is to trust anything or anyone more than God.

**118:14**  
Exod 15:2  
Isa 12:2

**118:15**  
Ps 89:13  
Luke 1:51

**118:18**  
Jer 31:18  
1 Cor 11:32  
2 Cor 6:9

**118:19**  
Isa 26:2

**118:22**  
Matt 21:42  
Mark 12:10-11  
<sup>†</sup>Luke 20:17  
<sup>†</sup>Acts 4:11  
<sup>†</sup>1 Pet 2:7

**118:23**  
<sup>†</sup>Matt 21:42  
<sup>†</sup>Mark 12:11

**118:26**  
<sup>†</sup>Matt 21:9  
<sup>†</sup>Mark 11:9  
<sup>†</sup>Luke 13:35; 19:38  
<sup>†</sup>John 12:13

**118:27**  
1 Pet 2:9

**118:28**  
Exod 15:2  
Isa 25:1

<sup>14</sup>The LORD *is* my strength and song, and is become my salvation.

<sup>15</sup>The voice of rejoicing and salvation *is* in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.

<sup>16</sup>The right hand of the LORD is exalted: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.

<sup>17</sup>I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD.

<sup>18</sup>The LORD hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death.

<sup>19</sup>Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, *and* I will praise the LORD:

<sup>20</sup>This gate of the LORD, into which the righteous shall enter.

<sup>21</sup>I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.

<sup>22</sup>The stone *which* the builders refused is become the head *stone* of the corner.

<sup>23</sup>This is the LORD's doing; it *is* marvellous in our eyes.

<sup>24</sup>This *is* the day *which* the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

<sup>25</sup>Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.

<sup>26</sup>Blessed *be* he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD.

<sup>27</sup>God *is* the LORD, which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, *even* unto the horns of the altar.

<sup>28</sup>Thou *art* my God, and I will praise thee: *thou art* my God, I will exalt thee.

<sup>29</sup>O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is* good: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

**Theme:** God's Word is true and wonderful. Stay true to God and his Word no matter how bad the world becomes. Obedience to God's laws is the only way to achieve real happiness.

**Author:** Anonymous, though some suggest Ezra the priest

## 119

### ALEPH

**119:1**  
Prov 11:20; 13:6

**119:2**  
Deut 4:29; 10:12;  
11:13; 30:2

**119:4**  
Deut 4:13

**119:5**  
2 Chr 7:17  
Prov 4:26

**119:8**  
Ps 71:9, 18

<sup>1</sup>Blessed *are* the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD.

<sup>2</sup>Blessed *are* they that keep his testimonies, *and that* seek him with the whole heart.

<sup>3</sup>They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways.

<sup>4</sup>Thou hast commanded *us* to keep thy precepts diligently.

<sup>5</sup>O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!

<sup>6</sup>Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments.

<sup>7</sup>I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments.

<sup>8</sup>I will keep thy statutes: O forsake me not utterly.

### BETH

<sup>9</sup>Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed *thereto* according to thy word.

<sup>10</sup>With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.

**118:15** tabernacles: tents. **118:18** sore: severely.

**118:22, 23** Jesus referred to this verse when he spoke of being rejected by his own people (Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10, 11; Luke 20:17). Although he was rejected, Jesus is now the "chief corner stone," the most important part of the church (Acts 4:11; Ephesians 2:20; 1 Peter 2:6, 7).

**118:24** There are days when the last thing we want to do is rejoice. Our mood is down, our situation out of hand, our sorrow or guilt overwhelming. We can relate to the writers of the psalms who often felt this way. But no matter how low the writers felt, they were always honest with God. And as they talked to God, their prayers ended in praise. When you don't feel like rejoicing, tell God how you truly feel. You will find that God will give you a reason to rejoice.

**119:1ff** This is both the longest psalm and the longest chapter in the Bible. It may have been written by Ezra after the Temple was rebuilt (Ezra 6:14, 15) as a repetitive meditation on the beauty of God's Word and how it helps us stay pure and grow in faith. This psalm has 22 carefully constructed sections, each corresponding to a different letter in the Hebrew alphabet and each verse begin-

ning with the letter of its section. Almost every verse mentions God's Word. Such repetition was common in the Hebrew culture. People did not have personal copies of the Scriptures to read as we do, so God's people memorized his Word and passed it along orally. The structure of this psalm allowed for easy memorization. Remember, God's Word, the Bible, is the only sure guide for living a pure life.

**119:9** We are drowning in a sea of sexual images and sinful attractions. Everywhere we look we find temptation to fill our minds with thoughts of sexual relationships of which God wouldn't approve. The writer asked a question that troubles us all: How do we stay pure in a contaminating environment? We cannot do this on our own but must have counsel and strength more dynamic than the tempting influences around us. Where can we find that strength and wisdom? By reading God's Word and doing what it says.

- 11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. **119:11**  
 12 Blessed *art* thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes. **119:12**  
 13 With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth. **119:13**  
 14 I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as *much as* in all riches. **119:14**  
 15 I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. **119:15**  
 16 I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word. **119:16**

## GIMEL

- 17 Deal bountifully with thy servant, *that* I may live, and keep thy word. **119:17**  
 18 Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. **119:18**  
 19 I *am* a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me. **119:19**  
 20 My soul breaketh for the longing *that it hath* unto thy judgments at all times. **119:20**  
 21 Thou hast rebuked the proud *that are* cursed, which do err from thy commandments. **119:21**  
 22 Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have kept thy testimonies. **119:22**  
 23 Princes also did sit *and* speak against me: *but* thy servant did meditate in thy statutes. **119:23**  
 24 Thy testimonies also *are* my delight *and* my counsellors. **119:24**

## DALETH

- 25 My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word. **119:25**  
 26 I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me: teach me thy statutes. **119:26**  
 27 Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works. **119:27**  
 28 My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according unto thy word. **119:28**  
 29 Remove from me the way of lying: and grant me thy law graciously. **119:29**  
 30 I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid *before* me. **119:30**  
 31 I have stuck unto thy testimonies: O LORD, put me not to shame. **119:31**  
 32 I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart. **119:32**

## HE

- 33 Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it *unto* the end. **119:33**  
 34 Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with *my* whole heart. **119:34**  
 35 Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight. **119:35**  
 36 Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness. **119:36**  
 37 Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; *and* quicken thou me in thy way. **119:37**  
 38 Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is *devoted* to thy fear. **119:38**  
 39 Turn away my reproach which I fear: for thy judgments *are* good. **119:39**  
 40 Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness. **119:40**

**119:25** *cleaveth*: clings. *quicken thou me*: revive me. **119:31** *stuck unto*: held fast to. **119:32** *enlarge my heart*: set my heart free. **119:36** *incline*: turn. **119:37** *vanity*: worthless things. **119:38** *stablish*: establish. *thy fear*: fearing you. **119:40** *quicken me*: revive me.

**119:11** Storing God's Word in our heart is a deterrent to sin. This alone should inspire us to memorize Scripture. But memorization alone will not keep us from sin; we must also put God's Word to work in our lives, making it a vital guide to everything we do.

**119:12-24** Most of us chafe under rules, for we think they restrict us from doing what we want. At first glance, then, it may seem strange to hear the writer talk of rejoicing in God's laws as much as in riches. But God's laws were given to free us to be all he wants us to be. They restrict us from doing those things that will cripple us and keep us from being our best. God's guidelines help us follow in his path and avoid paths that lead to destruction.

**119:19** The writer said that he is a "stranger in the earth," and so he needed guidance. Almost any long trip requires a map or guide. As we travel through life, the Bible should be our road map, pointing out safe routes, obstacles to avoid, and our final destination. We must recognize ourselves as pilgrims, travelers here on earth who need to study God's map to learn the way. If we ignore the map, we will wander aimlessly through life and risk missing our real destination.

**119:25** To *quicken* means to make alive, to revive. How can God's Word revive us? Our world is full of evil; God's Word revives us

with the promise of victory over evil. Our world says we are worthless without beauty or possessions; God's Word gives us value by telling us that God created us and loves us. Our world is full of discouragement; God's Word encourages us. Our world has no real, lasting answers; God's Word gives satisfying, eternal answers. Read God's Word and be revived.

**119:27, 28** Our lives are cluttered with rule books, but the authors never come with us to help us follow the rules. But God does. That is the uniqueness of our Bible. God not only provides the rules and guidelines, but comes with us personally each day to strengthen us so that we can live according to those rules. All we must do is invite him and respond to his direction.

**119:36** In today's world, people most often covet money. Money represents power, influence, and success. For many people, it is a god. They think about little else. True, money can ease labor, buy certain comforts, and offer some security. But far more valuable than wealth is obedience to God, for it is a heavenly treasure rather than an earthly one (Luke 12:33). We should do what God wants regardless of the financial implications. Make the writer's prayer your own, asking God to turn your heart toward his laws and not toward making money; it's in your own best interest in the long run.

## VAU

41 Let thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD, *even* thy salvation, according to thy word.  
 42 So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me: for I trust in thy word.  
 43 And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth; for I have hoped in thy judgments.  
 44 So shall I keep thy law continually for ever and ever.  
 45 And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts.  
 46 I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed.  
 47 And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved.  
 48 My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes.

119:44  
Acts 26:1-2

119:46  
Matt 10:18  
Acts 26:1-2

119:50  
Rom 15:4

119:51  
Job 23:11  
Jer 20:7

119:52  
Ps 103:18

119:53  
Exod 32:19  
Neh 13:25

119:55  
Pss 42:8; 63:6; 92:2  
Acts 16:25

119:57  
Deut 33:9  
Ps 16:5

119:58  
Ps 41:4

119:59  
Mark 14:72  
Luke 15:17

119:61  
Ps 140:5

119:63  
Ps 101:6

119:64  
Ps 33:5

119:66  
Phil 1:9

119:67  
Jer 31:18-19  
Heb 12:5-11

119:68  
Pss 86:5; 125:4

119:70  
Ps 17:10

Isa 6:10  
Jer 5:28

119:72  
Prov 8:10-11, 19

119:73  
Job 31:15  
Ps 139:15-16

119:74  
Ps 35:27

119:75  
Heb 12:10

119:78  
Jer 50:32

## ZAIN

49 Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.  
 50 This *is* my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.  
 51 The proud have had me greatly in derision: *yet* have I not declined from thy law.  
 52 I remembered thy judgments of old, O LORD; and have comforted myself.  
 53 Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake thy law.  
 54 Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.  
 55 I have remembered thy name, O LORD, in the night, and have kept thy law.  
 56 This I had, because I kept thy precepts.

## CHETH

57 *Thou art* my portion, O LORD: I have said that I would keep thy words.  
 58 I intreated thy favour with *my* whole heart: be merciful unto me according to thy word.  
 59 I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.  
 60 I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.  
 61 The bands of the wicked have robbed me: *but* I have not forgotten thy law.  
 62 At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments.  
 63 I *am* a companion of all *them* that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.  
 64 The earth, O LORD, is full of thy mercy: teach me thy statutes.

## TETH

65 Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O LORD, according unto thy word.  
 66 Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments.  
 67 Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy word.  
 68 Thou *art* good, and doest good; teach me thy statutes.  
 69 The proud have forged a lie against me: *but* I will keep thy precepts with *my* whole heart.  
 70 Their heart is as fat as grease; *but* I delight in thy law.  
 71 *It is* good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.  
 72 The law of thy mouth *is* better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.

## JOD

73 Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments.  
 74 They that fear thee will be glad when they see me; because I have hoped in thy word.  
 75 I know, O LORD, that thy judgments *are* right, and *that* thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.  
 76 Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant.  
 77 Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for thy law *is* my delight.  
 78 Let the proud be ashamed; for they dealt perversely with me without a cause: *but* I will meditate in thy precepts.  
 79 Let those that fear thee turn unto me, and those that have known thy testimonies.  
 80 Let my heart be sound in thy statutes; that I be not ashamed.

119:45 *at liberty*: in freedom. 119:51 *declined*: turned. 119:58 *intreated*: have pleaded for. 119:61 *bands*: ropes. *robbed*: bound. 119:70 *as fat as grease*: dull and callous.

**119:44-46** The writer talks about keeping the laws and yet walking at liberty. Contrary to what we often expect, obeying God's laws frees us to be what God designed us to be. By seeking God's

salvation and forgiveness, we have freedom from sin and the resulting oppressive guilt. By living God's way, we have freedom to fulfill God's plan for our lives.



## CAPH

- 81 My soul fainteth for thy salvation: *but* I hope in thy word.  
 82 Mine eyes fail for thy word, saying, When wilt thou comfort me?  
 83 For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; *yet* do I not forget thy statutes.  
 84 How many *are* the days of thy servant? when wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me?  
 85 The proud have digged pits for me, which *are* not after thy law.  
 86 All thy commandments *are* faithful: they persecute me wrongfully; help thou me.  
 87 They had almost consumed me upon earth; but I forsook not thy precepts.  
 88 Quicken me after thy lovingkindness; so shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth.

119:82  
Isa 38:14  
Lam 2:11  
119:84  
Rev 6:10

119:85  
Pss 35:19; 57:6  
Jer 18:22

## LAMED

- 89 For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.  
 90 Thy faithfulness *is* unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth.  
 91 They continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all *are* thy servants.  
 92 Unless thy law *had been* my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction.  
 93 I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me.  
 94 I *am* thine, save me; for I have sought thy precepts.  
 95 The wicked have waited for me to destroy me: *but* I will consider thy testimonies.  
 96 I have seen an end of all perfection: *but* thy commandment *is* exceeding broad.

119:89  
Isa 40:8  
Matt 24:35  
1 Pet 1:25  
119:90  
Pss 89:1-2; 148:6  
119:91  
Jer 31:35  
119:95  
Ps 40:14  
Isa 32:7

## MEM

- 97 O how love I thy law! it *is* my meditation all the day.  
 98 Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they *are* ever with me.  
 99 I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies *are* my meditation.  
 100 I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.  
 101 I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word.  
 102 I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me.  
 103 How sweet are thy words unto my taste! *yea, sweeter* than honey to my mouth!  
 104 Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.

119:98  
Deut 4:6

119:100  
Job 32:7-9

119:102  
Deut 17:20  
Josh 23:6

119:103  
Ps 19:10

## NUN

- 105 Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.  
 106 I have sworn, and I will perform *it*, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.  
 107 I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O LORD, according unto thy word.  
 108 Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD, and teach me thy judgments.  
 109 My soul *is* continually in my hand: yet do I not forget thy law.  
 110 The wicked have laid a snare for me: yet I erred not from thy precepts.  
 111 Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they *are* the rejoicing of my heart.  
 112 I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes always, *even unto* the end.

119:108  
Hos 14:2  
Heb 13:15

119:110  
Pss 91:3; 140:5

119:111  
Deut 33:4

119:113  
1 Kgs 18:21  
Jas 1:8; 4:8

119:114  
Pss 31:20; 61:4

119:115  
Pss 6:8; 139:19  
Matt 7:23

119:116  
Pss 25:2, 20;  
31:1, 17  
Rom 5:5; 9:33  
Phil 1:20

## SAMECH

- 113 I hate *vain* thoughts: but thy law do I love.  
 114 Thou *art* my hiding place and my shield: I hope in thy word.  
 115 Depart from me, ye evildoers: for I will keep the commandments of my God.  
 116 Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope.

119:83 bottle: wineskin. 119:88 quicken me: revive me. 119:96 an end: the limit. 119:100 ancients: elders.  
 119:101 refrained: restrained. 119:112 inclined: set. 119:113 vain thoughts: double-minded men.

**119:97–104** God's Word makes us wise—wiser than our enemies, wiser than any teachers who ignore it. True wisdom goes beyond amassing knowledge; it is *applying* knowledge in a life-changing way. Intelligent or experienced people are not necessarily wise. Wisdom comes from allowing what God teaches to guide us.

**119:105** To walk safely in the woods at night, we need a light in order to avoid tripping over tree roots or falling into holes. In this life, we walk through a dark forest of evil. But the Bible can be our

light to show us the way ahead so we won't stumble as we walk. It reveals the entangling roots of false values and philosophies.

**119:113** *Vain thoughts* are the thoughts of people who cannot make up their minds between good and evil. But when it comes to obeying God, there is no middle ground; you must take a stand. Either you are obeying him or you are not. Either you are doing what he wants or you are undecided. Choose to obey God and say with the writer, "Thy law do I love."



119:117  
Ps 12:5  
Prov 29:25

119:119  
Isa 1:22, 25  
Ezek 22:18-19

119:120  
Job 4:14  
Hab 3:16

119:121  
2 Sam 8:15  
Job 29:14

119:124  
Pss 51:1, 106:45;  
109:26

119:126  
Jer 18:23  
Ezek 31:11

119:128  
Ps 19:8

119:130  
Prov 6:23

119:133  
Ps 19:13

119:134  
Ps 142:6

119:135  
Num 6:25  
Ps 67:1

119:136  
Jer 9:1, 18, 14:17  
Lam 3:48

119:137  
Ezra 9:15  
Jer 12:1  
Dan 9:7, 14

119:139  
Ps 69:9

119:140  
Ps 12:6

119:141  
Ps 22:6

119:144  
Ps 19:9

119:146  
Ps 3:7

119:147  
Ps 108:2

119:151  
Ps 34:18  
Isa 50:8

119:152  
Luke 21:33

119:154  
Ps 35:1  
Mic 7:9

117 Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe: and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually.

118 Thou hast trodden down all them that err from thy statutes: for their deceit is falsehood.

119 Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth *like* dross: therefore I love thy testimonies.

120 My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments.

#### AIN

121 I have done judgment and justice: leave me not to mine oppressors.

122 Be surety for thy servant for good: let not the proud oppress me.

123 Mine eyes fail for thy salvation, and for the word of thy righteousness.

124 Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy, and teach me thy statutes.

125 I *am* thy servant; give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies.

126 *It is time for thee, LORD, to work: for they have made void thy law.*

127 Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold.

128 Therefore I esteem all *thy* precepts *concerning* all *things to be right; and* I hate every false way.

#### PE

129 Thy testimonies *are* wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them.

130 The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.

131 I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for thy commandments.

132 Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name.

133 Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.

134 Deliver me from the oppression of man: so will I keep thy precepts.

135 Make thy face to shine upon thy servant; and teach me thy statutes.

136 Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.

#### TZADDI

137 Righteous *art* thou, O LORD, and upright *are* thy judgments.

138 Thy testimonies *that* thou hast commanded *are* righteous and very faithful.

139 My zeal hath consumed me, because mine enemies have forgotten thy words.

140 Thy word *is* very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it.

141 I *am* small and despised: *yet* do not I forget thy precepts.

142 Thy righteousness *is* an everlasting righteousness, and thy law *is* the truth.

143 Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me: *yet* thy commandments *are* my delights.

144 The righteousness of thy testimonies *is* everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live.

#### KOPH

145 I cried with *my* whole heart; hear me, O LORD: I will keep thy statutes.

146 I cried unto thee; save me, and I shall keep thy testimonies.

147 I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: I hoped in thy word.

148 Mine eyes prevent the *night* watches, that I might meditate in thy word.

149 Hear my voice according unto thy lovingkindness: O LORD, quicken me according to thy judgment.

150 They draw nigh that follow after mischief: they are far from thy law.

151 Thou *art* near, O LORD; and all thy commandments *are* truth.

152 Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever.

#### RESH

153 Consider mine affliction, and deliver me: for I do not forget thy law.

154 Plead my cause, and deliver me: quicken me according to thy word.

119:118 *trodden down*: rejected. 119:121 *judgment and justice*: justice and righteousness. 119:122 *be surety for*: ensure. 119:132 *usest to do unto*: always do to. 119:147 *prevented*: rose before. 119:148 *prevent*: are awake before. 119:149 *quicken me*: revive me. *judgment*: justice. 119:150 *mischief*: wickedness. 119:154 *quicken me*: revive me.

**119:125** Faith comes alive when we apply Scripture to our daily tasks and concerns. With the writer, we need the understanding and the desire to apply Scripture where we need help. The Bible is

like medicine—it goes to work only when you apply it to the infected areas. As you read the Bible, be alert for lessons, commands, or examples that you can apply to your life situation.

155 Salvation is far from the wicked: for they seek not thy statutes.

156 Great *are* thy tender mercies, O LORD: quicken me according to thy judgments.

157 Many *are* my persecutors and mine enemies; *yet* do I not decline from thy testimonies.

158 I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not thy word.

159 Consider how I love thy precepts: quicken me, O LORD, according to thy loving-kindness.

160 Thy word is true *from* the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments *endureth* for ever.

#### SCHIN

161 Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but my heart standeth in awe of thy word.

162 I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil.

163 I hate and abhor lying: *but* thy law do I love.

164 Seven times a day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments.

165 Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.

166 LORD, I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments.

167 My soul hath kept thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly.

168 I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies: for all my ways *are* before thee.

#### TAU

169 Let my cry come near before thee, O LORD: give me understanding according to thy word.

170 Let my supplication come before thee: deliver me according to thy word.

171 My lips shall utter praise, when thou hast taught me thy statutes.

172 My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments *are* righteousness.

173 Let thine hand help me; for I have chosen thy precepts.

174 I have longed for thy salvation, O LORD; and thy law is my delight.

175 Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee; and let thy judgments help me.

176 I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments.

119:156  
2 Sam 24:14

119:158  
Ps 139:21

119:162  
1 Sam 30:16  
Isa 9:3

119:163  
Ps 31:6  
Prov 13:5

119:165  
Prov 3:23  
1 Jn 2:10

119:166  
Gen 49:18

119:168  
Ps 139:3  
Prov 5:21

119:169  
Ps 18:6

119:170  
Pss 22:20; 31:2;  
140:6

119:171  
Isa 2:3  
Mic 4:2

119:172  
Ps 51:14

119:173  
Josh 24:22  
Ps 37:24

119:175  
Isa 55:3

119:176  
Isa 53:6  
Luke 15:4

**Theme:** A prayer for deliverance from false accusers. All believers must live with the tension of being in the world but not belonging to it.

**Author:** Anonymous, though some suggest Hezekiah

## 120

*A Song of degrees*

1 In my distress I cried unto the LORD, and he heard me.

2 Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips, *and* from a deceitful tongue.

3 What shall be given unto thee? or what shall be done unto thee, *thou* false tongue?

4 Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper.

5 Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, *that* I dwell in the tents of Kedar!

6 My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace.

7 I *am* for peace: but when I speak, they *are* for war.

120:1  
Pss 18:6; 102:2

120:2  
Ps 52:4  
Prov 12:22

120:4  
Ps 140:10

120:5  
Gen 10:2; 25:13  
Jer 2:10; 49:28

120:7  
Pss 55:21; 109:4

119:157 *decline:* turn. 119:170 *supplication:* prayer. 120:4 *coals of juniper:* burning coals of the broom tree.

**119:160** One of God's characteristics is truthfulness. He embodies perfect truth, and therefore his Word cannot lie. It is true and dependable for guidance and help (see John 17:14–17). The Bible is completely true and trustworthy.

**119:165** Modern society longs for peace of mind. Here is clear-cut instruction on how to realize this: If we love God and obey his laws, we will have "great peace." Trust in God, who alone stands above the pressures of daily life and gives us full assurance.

**120—134** Psalms 120—134 are called "Pilgrim Psalms" or "Songs of Degrees." They were sung by those who journeyed to the Temple for the annual festivals. Each psalm is a "step" along

the journey. Psalm 120 begins the journey in a distant land in hostile surroundings; Psalm 122 pictures the pilgrims arriving in Jerusalem; and the rest of the psalms move toward the Temple and mention the various characteristics of God associated with it.

**120:5, 6** Mesech (Meshech) was a nation far to the north of Israel; Kedar a nation to the southeast. Both were known for being warlike and barbarian. Because the writer couldn't have been in both places at once, he was lamenting that he felt far from home and surrounded by heathen people.

**120:7** Peacemaking is not always popular. Some people prefer to fight for what they believe in. The glory of battle is in the hope of winning, but someone must be a loser. The glory of peacemaking is that it may actually produce two winners. Peacemaking is God's way, so we should carefully and prayerfully attempt to be peacemakers.

**Theme:** We can depend on God for help. Pilgrims must travel through lonely country to their destination; they are protected, not by anything created, but by the Creator of everything.

**Author:** Anonymous, though some suggest Hezekiah

## 121 *A Song of degrees*

121:2  
Ps 115:15; 124:8  
121:3  
Ps 66:9; 127:1  
121:5  
Ps 91:4  
121:6  
Isa 49:10  
Rev 7:16  
121:7  
Ps 91:10-12

- 1 I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.
- 2 My help *cometh* from the LORD, which made heaven and earth.
- 3 He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.
- 4 Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.
- 5 The LORD *is* thy keeper: the LORD *is* thy shade upon thy right hand.
- 6 The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.
- 7 The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.
- 8 The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.

**Theme:** Stepping into the presence of God. What Jerusalem was for the Israelites, the church is to the believer.

**Author:** David

## 122 *A Song of degrees of David*

122:1  
Isa 2:3  
Zech 8:21  
122:3  
Ps 48:13  
122:4  
Deut 16:16  
122:5  
Deut 17:8  
2 Chr 19:8  
122:6  
Ps 102:14  
122:7  
Isa 62:6  
122:8  
Ps 133:1

- 1 I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD.
- 2 Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.
- 3 Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together:
- 4 Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the LORD.
- 5 For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David.
- 6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.
- 7 Peace be within thy walls, *and* prosperity within thy palaces.
- 8 For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace *be* within thee.
- 9 Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek thy good.

**Theme:** Look to God for mercy. We are encouraged to be attentive to God's leading.

**Author:** Anonymous, though some suggest Hezekiah

## 123 *A Song of degrees*

123:1  
Ps 114:4; 141:8  
123:2  
Mal 1:6

- 1 Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens.
- 2 Behold, as the eyes of servants *look* unto the hand of their masters, *and* as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes *wait* upon the LORD our God, until that he have mercy upon us.

121:4 *keepeth*: watches over. 121:6 *smite*: harm. 122:3 *compact*: bound firmly.

**121:1ff** This song expresses assurance and hope in God's protection day and night. He not only made the hills but heaven and earth as well. We should never trust a lesser power than God himself. But not only is he all-powerful, he also watches over us. Nothing detracts or deters him. We are safe. We never outgrow our need for God's untiring watch over our lives.

**122:1** Going to God's house can be a chore or a delight. For the writer, it was a delight. As a pilgrim attending one of the three great religious feasts, he was excited to worship with God's people in God's house. We may find worship a chore if we have sin in our lives or if our love for God has cooled. But if we are close to God and enjoy his presence, we will hunger to worship and praise him. Our attitude toward God will determine our view of worship.

**122:5** The "thrones of judgment" are the courts of justice by the city gate. In Bible times, the elders in a town sat to hear cases and administer justice at the gate (Ruth 4:1, 2). Sometimes the king himself would sit at the gate to meet his subjects and make legal decisions (2 Samuel 19:8).

**122:6-9** The writer was not praying for his own peace and prosperity, but for that of his fellow citizens in Jerusalem. This is intercessory prayer, prayer on behalf of others. Too often we pray for our own needs and desires when we should be interceding for others. Will you intercede for someone in need today?

**122:6-9** The peace sought in these verses is much more than the mere absence of conflict. It suggests completeness, health, justice, prosperity, and protection. The world cannot provide this peace. Real peace comes from faith in God because he alone embodies all the characteristics of peace. To find peace of mind and peace with others, you must find peace with God.

**123:1ff** The writer lifted his eyes to God, waiting and watching for him to send his mercy. The more he waited, the more he cried out to God, because he knew that the evil and proud offered no help—they had only contempt for God.

<sup>3</sup>Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us: for we are exceedingly filled with contempt.

<sup>4</sup>Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, *and* with the contempt of the proud.

**123:3**  
Neh 4:4  
Pss 4:1; 51:1; 79:4;  
119:22  
**123:4**  
Ps 79:4

**Theme:** God delivers us from those who seek to destroy us. God is on the side of those who seek him.

**Author:** David, probably written after his defeat of the Philistines (2 Samuel 5:17–25)

## 124 *A Song of degrees of David*

<sup>1</sup>If it *had not been* the LORD who was on our side, now may Israel say;

<sup>2</sup>If it *had not been* the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us:

<sup>3</sup>Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us:

<sup>4</sup>Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul:

<sup>5</sup>Then the proud waters had gone over our soul.

<sup>6</sup>Blessed *be* the LORD, who hath not given us *as* a prey to their teeth.

<sup>7</sup>Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped.

<sup>8</sup>Our help *is* in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

**124:1**  
Pss 94:17; 129:1  
**124:3**  
Pss 56:1; 57:3  
**124:4**  
Pss 18:16; 69:2  
**124:7**  
Pss 91:3; 141:10  
Prov 6:5  
**124:8**  
Gen 1:1  
Ps 121:2

**Theme:** God is our Protector. The mountains around Jerusalem symbolize God's protection for his people.

**Author:** Anonymous, though some suggest Hezekiah

## 125 *A Song of degrees*

<sup>1</sup>They that trust in the LORD *shall be* as mount Zion, *which* cannot be removed, *but* abideth for ever.

<sup>2</sup>As the mountains *are* round about Jerusalem, so the LORD *is* round about his people from henceforth even for ever.

<sup>3</sup>For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous; lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity.

<sup>4</sup>Do good, O LORD, unto *those that be* good, and *to them that are* upright in their hearts.

<sup>5</sup>As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the LORD shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity: *but* peace *shall be* upon Israel.

**125:1**  
Ps 46:5  
**125:2**  
Ps 121:8  
Zech 2:5  
**125:3**  
1 Sam 24:10  
Prov 22:8  
Isa 14:5  
**125:4**  
Pss 7:10; 94:15;  
119:68  
**125:5**  
Gal 6:16

**Theme:** God does great things. His power not only releases us from sin's captive hold, but brings us back to him.

**Author:** Anonymous, probably written to celebrate the exiles' return from captivity (Ezra 1)

## 126 *A Song of degrees*

<sup>1</sup>When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.

<sup>2</sup>Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them.

<sup>3</sup>The LORD hath done great things for us; *whereof* we are glad.

<sup>4</sup>Turn again our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the south.

<sup>5</sup>They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

<sup>6</sup>He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves *with him*.

**126:1**  
Jer 29:14  
**126:2**  
Job 8:21  
Ps 51:14  
**126:3**  
Isa 25:9  
**126:4**  
Isa 35:6; 43:19  
**126:5**  
Ps 80:5  
Gal 6:9

**124:3** quick: alive. **126:2** heathen: nations.

**124:7, 8** Do you ever feel trapped by overwhelming odds? With God, there is always a way out because he is the Creator of all that exists. No problem is beyond his ability to solve; no circumstance is too difficult for him. We can turn to the Creator for help in our time of need, for he is on our side. God will provide a way out; we need only trust him and look for it. David compared this to a bird escaping a hunter's trap.

**125:1** Have you ever known people who were drawn to every new fad or idea? Such people are inconsistent and therefore

unreliable. The secret to consistency is to trust in God because he never changes. He is completely reliable and will keep us steady.

**125:3** Although the writer said, "The rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous," often in Israel's history the nation had to put up with evil rulers. The writer was expressing what will ultimately happen when God executes his final judgment. Human sinfulness often ruins God's ideal on earth, but that doesn't mean God has lost control. Evil prevails only as long as God allows.

**126:5, 6** God's capacity for restoring life is beyond our under-

**Theme:** Life without God is senseless. All of life's work—building a home, establishing a career, and raising a family—must have God as the foundation.

**Author:** Solomon

## 127 *A Song of degrees for Solomon*

127:1  
Ps 78:69

127:2  
Gen 3:17  
Job 11:18-19  
Eccl 5:12

127:3  
Deut 28:4

<sup>1</sup>Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh *but* in vain.

<sup>2</sup>*It is vain* for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: *for* so he giveth his beloved sleep.

<sup>3</sup>Lo, children *are* an heritage of the LORD: *and* the fruit of the womb *is* his reward.

<sup>4</sup>As arrows *are* in the hand of a mighty man; so *are* children of the youth.

<sup>5</sup>Happy *is* the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.

**Theme:** God, the true head of the home. This is called the marriage prayer because it was often sung at Israelite marriages. God will reward your devotion to him with inner peace.

**Author:** Anonymous, though some suggest Hezekiah

## 128 *A Song of degrees*

128:1  
Pss 112:1; 119:3

128:2  
Eccl 8:12

128:3  
Ps 52:8

128:5  
Pss 122:9; 134:3

128:6  
Gen 48:11

<sup>1</sup>Blessed *is* every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways.

<sup>2</sup>For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy *shalt* thou *be*, and *it shall be* well with thee.

<sup>3</sup>Thy wife *shall be* as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table.

<sup>4</sup>Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the LORD.

<sup>5</sup>The LORD shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life.

<sup>6</sup>Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, *and* peace upon Israel.

**Theme:** Confidence in times of persecution. God will bring us through the tough times.

**Author:** Anonymous, though some suggest Hezekiah

## 129 *A Song of degrees*

129:1  
Exod 1:11

129:2  
Jer 15:20  
Matt 16:18

<sup>1</sup>Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, may Israel now say:

<sup>2</sup>Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth: yet they have not prevailed against me.

127:1 *keep:* watches over. *waketh:* stays awake.

standing. Forests burn down and are able to grow back. Broken bones heal. Even grief is not a permanent condition. Our tears can be seeds that will grow into a harvest of joy because God is able to bring good out of tragedy. When burdened by sorrow, know that your times of grief will end and that you will again find joy. We must be patient as we wait. God's great harvest of joy is coming!

**127:1** Families establish homes and watchmen guard cities, but both these activities are futile unless God is with them. A family without God can never experience the spiritual bond God brings to relationships. A city without God will crumble from evil and corruption on the inside. Don't make the mistake of leaving God out of your life—if you do, all your accomplishments will be futile. Make God your highest priority, and let him do the building.

**127:2** God is not against human effort. Hard work honors God (Proverbs 31:10–29). But working to the exclusion of rest or to the neglect of family may be a cover-up for an inability to trust God to provide for our needs. We all need adequate rest and times of spiritual refreshment. On the other hand, this verse is not an excuse to be lazy (Proverbs 18:9). Be careful to maintain a balance: Work while trusting God, and also rest while trusting him.

**127:3–5** Children are too often seen as liabilities rather than assets. But the Bible calls children “an heritage of the LORD,” a reward. We can learn valuable lessons from their inquisitive minds and trusting spirits. Those who view children as a distraction or nuisance should instead see them as an opportunity to shape the future. We dare not treat them as an inconvenience when God values them so highly.

**128:1ff** A good family life is a reward for following God. The values outlined in God's Word include love, service, honesty, integrity, and prayer. These help all relationships, and they are especially vital to home life. Is your home life heavenly or hectic? Reading and obeying God's Word is a good place to start to make your family all that it can be.

**129:2** The people of Israel were persecuted from their earliest days, but never destroyed completely. The same is true of the church. Christians have faced times of severe persecution, but the church has never been destroyed. As Jesus said to Peter, “Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18). When you face persecution and discrimination, take courage—the church will never be destroyed.

<sup>3</sup>The plowers plowed upon my back: they made long their furrows.  
<sup>4</sup>The LORD is righteous: he hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked.  
<sup>5</sup>Let them all be confounded and turned back that hate Zion.  
<sup>6</sup>Let them be as the grass *upon* the housetops, which withereth afore it groweth up:  
<sup>7</sup>Wherewith the mower filleth not his hand; nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom.  
<sup>8</sup>Neither do they which go by say, The blessing of the LORD *be* upon you: we bless you in the name of the LORD.

**129:5**  
 Ps 71:13  
 Mic 4:11  
**129:6**  
 2 Kgs 19:26  
 Ps 37:2  
**129:8**  
 Ruth 2:4  
 Ps 118:26

**Theme:** Assurance of the Lord's forgiveness. God will surely forgive us if we confess our sins to him.

**Author:** Anonymous, though some suggest Hezekiah

## 130 *A Song of degrees*

<sup>1</sup>Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD.  
<sup>2</sup>Lord, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.  
<sup>3</sup>If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?  
<sup>4</sup>But *there* is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.  
<sup>5</sup>I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.  
<sup>6</sup>My soul *waiteth* for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: *I say, more than* they that watch for the morning.  
<sup>7</sup>Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD *there* is mercy, and with him *is* plenteous redemption.  
<sup>8</sup>And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

**130:1**  
 Pss 42:7; 69:2  
**130:2**  
 2 Chr 6:40  
 Pss 28:2; 64:1  
**130:3**  
 Pss 76:7; 86:5  
**130:4**  
 Exod 34:7  
**130:5**  
 Ps 40:1  
 Isa 8:17  
**130:6**  
 Ps 63:6  
**130:7**  
 Pss 103:4; 131:3  
**130:8**  
 Luke 1:68

**Theme:** Trust and contentment. Quiet trust in God is the basis for our contentment.

**Author:** David

## 131 *A Song of degrees of David*

<sup>1</sup>LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.  
<sup>2</sup>Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul *is* even as a weaned child.  
<sup>3</sup>Let Israel hope in the LORD from henceforth and for ever.

**131:1**  
 Rom 12:16  
**131:2**  
 Ps 62:1  
**131:3**  
 Ps 130:7

**Theme:** Honor God and he will honor you. The psalmist reflects upon that great day when the Ark of the Covenant was brought to Jerusalem and praises God for his promise to perpetuate David's line.

**Author:** Anonymous

## 132 *A Song of degrees*

<sup>1</sup>LORD, remember David, *and* all his afflictions:  
<sup>2</sup>How he swore unto the LORD, *and* vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob;

**132:2**  
 Gen 49:24  
 Isa 49:26

**129:6** *afore:* before. **129:7** *bosom:* arms. **130:2** *the voice of my supplications:* my cry for mercy. **130:3** *mark:* keep a record of. **131:1** *lofty:* haughty.

**129:3** This verse foreshadows Jesus' unjust punishment before his death. He endured horrible lashes from the whip of his tormentors, which indeed made "furrows" on his back (John 19:1).

**130:1, 2** In the depths of despair, the writer cried out to God. Despair makes us feel isolated and distant from God, but this is precisely when we need God most. Despair over sin should not lead to self-pity, causing us to think more about ourselves than God. Instead, it should lead to confession and then to God's mercy, forgiveness, and redemption. When we feel overwhelmed by a problem, feeling sorry for ourselves will only increase feelings of hopelessness; but crying out to God turns our attention to the only one who can really help.

**130:3, 4** Marking iniquities—holding a grudge—is like building a wall between you and another person, and it is nearly impossible to talk openly while the wall is there. God never holds a

grudge; when he forgives, he forgives completely, tearing down any wall between him and us. Therefore, we can talk to him about anything. When you pray, realize that God is holding nothing against you. His lines of communication are completely open.

**131:1, 2** Pride results from overvaluing ourselves and undervaluing others. It leads to restlessness because it makes us dissatisfied with what we have and concerned about what everyone else is doing. It keeps us always hungering for more attention and adoration. By contrast, humility puts others first and allows us to be content with God's leading in our lives. Such contentment gives us security so that we no longer have to prove ourselves to others. Let humility and trust affect your perspective and give you the strength and freedom to serve God and others.

**132:2–5** When David became king, he built a beautiful palace, but he was troubled that the Ark of the Covenant, the symbol of God's



132:4  
Prov 6:4

132:5  
Acts 7:46

132:6  
Gen 35:19  
1 Sam 7:1; 17:12

132:7  
1 Chr 28:2  
Pss 5:7; 99:5

132:8-10  
/2 Chr 6:41-42

132:8  
Num 10:35  
Ps 78:61

132:9  
Ps 149:5

132:11  
2 Sam 7:12-16  
2 Chr 6:16  
Acts 2:30

132:12  
Luke 1:32

132:13  
Ps 78:68

132:14  
Matt 23:21

132:15  
Ps 107:9

<sup>3</sup>Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed;

<sup>4</sup>I will not give sleep to mine eyes, *or* slumber to mine eyelids,

<sup>5</sup>Until I find out a place for the LORD, an habitation for the mighty *God* of Jacob.

<sup>6</sup>Lo, we heard of it at Ephrathah: we found it in the fields of the wood.

<sup>7</sup>We will go into his tabernacles: we will worship at his footstool.

<sup>8</sup>Arise, O LORD, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength.

<sup>9</sup>Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy.

<sup>10</sup>For thy servant David's sake turn not away the face of thine anointed.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD hath sworn *in* truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.

<sup>12</sup>If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore.

<sup>13</sup>For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired *it* for his habitation.

<sup>14</sup>This *is* my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.

<sup>15</sup>I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread.

<sup>16</sup>I will also clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy.

<sup>17</sup>There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.

<sup>18</sup>His enemies will I clothe with shame: but upon himself shall his crown flourish.

**Theme:** The joy of harmonious relationships

**Author:** David

## 133 *A Song of degrees of David*

<sup>1</sup>Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* for brethren to dwell together in unity!

<sup>2</sup>*It is* like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, *even* Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;

<sup>3</sup>As the dew of Hermon, *and as the dew* that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, *even* life for evermore.

**Theme:** Worship God and experience the joy of his blessings

**Author:** Anonymous, though some suggest Hezekiah

## 134 *A Song of degrees*

<sup>1</sup>Behold, bless ye the LORD, all *ye* servants of the LORD, which by night stand in the house of the LORD.

132:3 *come into the tabernacle of my house:* enter my house. 132:5 *habitation:* dwelling. 132:7 *tabernacles:* dwelling place. 132:17 *bud:* grow. 133:2 *skirts:* border.

134:1  
Deut 10:8  
1 Chr 9:33  
2 Chr 29:11

presence among his people (Exodus 25:10–22), remained in a tent (2 Samuel 6:17; 7:1–17). This so bothered David that he couldn't sleep until he corrected the situation. He began to lay the plans for the Temple to house the Ark. We must live so close to God that we become restless until God's will is accomplished through us.

**132:11, 12** The promise that David's descendants would be on the throne forever is found in 2 Samuel 7:8–29. This promise had two parts: (1) David's descendants would perpetually rule over Israel as long as they followed God, and (2) David's royal line would never end. The first part was conditional; as long as the kings obeyed God, their dynasty continued. The second part of the promise is unconditional. It is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, a descendant of David, who reigns forever.

**132:17, 18** The budding "horn of David" refers to one of his mighty descendants. David's son, Solomon, was indeed a glorious king (1 Kings 3:10–14); but these verses look ahead even further to another descendant of David, Jesus the Messiah (Matthew 1:17). The power, might, and glory of the Messiah will last forever.

**133:1–3** David stated that harmony is pleasant and precious. Unfortunately, harmony does not abound in the church as it should. People disagree and cause division over unimportant issues. Some delight in causing tensions by discrediting others. Harmony is important because (1) it makes the church a positive example to the world and helps draw others to the Lord; (2) it

helps us cooperate as a body of believers as God meant us to, giving us a foretaste of heaven; (3) it renews and revitalizes ministry because there is less tension to sap our energy.

Living in harmony does not mean we will agree on everything; there will be many opinions just as there are many notes in a musical chord. But we must agree on our purpose in life—to work together for God. Our outward expression of unity will reflect our inward unity of purpose.

**133:2** The ointment was used by Moses to anoint Aaron as the first High Priest of Israel (Exodus 29:7) and to dedicate all the priests to God's service. Brotherly unity, like the anointing oil, shows that we are dedicated to serving God wholeheartedly.

**133:3** Mount Hermon is the tallest mountain in Palestine, located northeast of the Sea of Galilee.

**134:1–3** Why is an entire psalm aimed directly at a very small group—the Temple watchmen? Singing this psalm, the last of the "songs of degrees" (Psalms 120–134), the worshipers ascend the hill where the Temple sits and see the guards who protect it day and night. They view the guards' work as an act of praise to God, done reverently and responsibly. Make your job or your responsibility in the church an act of praise by doing it with reverence to God. Honor him by the quality of your work and the attitude of service you bring to it.

<sup>2</sup>Lift up your hands *in* the sanctuary, and bless the LORD.

<sup>3</sup>The LORD that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion.

**Theme:** A hymn of praise. This psalm contrasts the greatness of God with the vanity of idols. The heathen worship idols while God's people worship the living God.

**Author:** Anonymous

**135** <sup>1</sup>Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the name of the LORD; praise *him*, O ye servants of the LORD.

<sup>2</sup>Ye that stand in the house of the LORD, in the courts of the house of our God,

<sup>3</sup>Praise the LORD; for the LORD *is* good: sing praises unto his name; for *it is* pleasant.

<sup>4</sup>For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, *and* Israel for his peculiar treasure.

<sup>5</sup>For I know that the Lord *is* great, and *that* our LORD *is* above all gods.

<sup>6</sup>Whatsoever the LORD pleased, *that* did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.

<sup>7</sup>He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasuries.

<sup>8</sup>Who smote the firstborn of Egypt, both of man and beast.

<sup>9</sup>*Who* sent tokens and wonders into the midst of thee, O Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his servants.

<sup>10</sup>Who smote great nations, and slew mighty kings;

<sup>11</sup>Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan, and all the kingdoms of Canaan:

<sup>12</sup>And gave their land *for* an heritage, an heritage unto Israel his people.

<sup>13</sup>Thy name, O LORD, *endureth* for ever; *and* thy memorial, O LORD, throughout all generations.

<sup>14</sup>For the LORD will judge his people, and he will repent himself concerning his servants.

<sup>15</sup>The idols of the heathen *are* silver and gold, the work of men's hands.

<sup>16</sup>They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not;

<sup>17</sup>They have ears, but they hear not; neither is there *any* breath in their mouths.

<sup>18</sup>They that make them are like unto them: *so is* every one that trusteth in them.

<sup>19</sup>Bless the LORD, O house of Israel: bless the LORD, O house of Aaron:

<sup>20</sup>Bless the LORD, O house of Levi: ye that fear the LORD, bless the LORD.

<sup>21</sup>Blessed be the LORD out of Zion, which dwelleth at Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD.

**Theme:** The never-ending story of God's love. God deserves our praise because his endless love never fails.

**Author:** Anonymous

**136** <sup>1</sup>O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is* good: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

<sup>2</sup>O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

<sup>3</sup>O give thanks to the Lord of lords: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

<sup>4</sup>To him who alone doeth great wonders: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

<sup>5</sup>To him that by wisdom made the heavens: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

<sup>6</sup>To him that stretched out the earth above the waters: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

<sup>7</sup>To him that made great lights: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

<sup>8</sup>The sun to rule by day: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

<sup>9</sup>the moon and stars to rule by night: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

<sup>10</sup>To him that smote Egypt in their firstborn: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

<sup>11</sup>And brought out Israel from among them: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

**135:4** *peculiar:* special. **135:8** *smote:* struck down. **135:9** *tokens:* signs. **135:14** *repent himself concerning:* have compassion on. **135:15** *heathen:* nations. **136:10** *smote:* struck down.

**134:2**

Ps 28:2

1 Tim 2:8

**134:3**

Pss 124:8; 128:5

**135:2**

Ps 116:19

**135:3**

Pss 68:4; 100:5

**135:4**

Exod 19:5

Deut 7:6; 10:15

1 Pet 2:9

**135:5**

Pss 48:1; 97:9

**135:6**

Ps 115:3

**135:7**

Job 38:25-26

Jer 51:16

Zech 10:1

**135:8**

Ps 78:51

**135:9**

Deut 6:22

**135:10**

Ps 136:17-21

**135:11**

Num 21:33-35

Josh 12:7-24

**135:12**

Ps 78:55

**135:13**

Exod 3:15

Ps 102:12

**135:14**

Deut 32:36

Ps 106:45

**135:15-20**

//Ps 115:4-11

**135:20**

Ps 118:4

**136:1**

1 Chr 16:41

2 Chr 20:21

Ps 107:1

**136:2**

Deut 10:17

**136:4**

Ps 72:18

**136:5**

Prov 3:19

**136:6**

Ps 24:2

**136:7**

Ps 74:16

**136:8**

Gen 1:16

**136:10**

Exod 12:29

Ps 78:51

**136:11**

Exod 12:51; 13:3

Deut 9:29

**135:4** That Israel was a chosen people reflects God's commission to the nation in Deuteronomy 7:6-8. Election is also emphasized in Peter's sermon to the church in 1 Peter 2:9. God treasures us. He gives his love and mercy to all those who believe in him.

**135:14-18** Those who worshiped idols were as blind and insensitive as the idols themselves. They couldn't see or hear what God had to say. In subtle, imperceptible ways we become like the idols we worship. If the true God is your God, you will become more like him as you worship him. What are your goals? What takes

priority in your life? Choose carefully, because you will take on the characteristics of whatever you worship.

**136:1ff** Repeated throughout this psalm is the phrase, "for his mercy endureth for ever." This psalm may have been a responsive reading, the congregation saying these words in unison after each sentence. The repetition made this important lesson sink in. "Mercy" is a translation of a Hebrew word that includes aspects of love, kindness, mercy, and faithfulness. We never have to worry that God will run out of love, because his mercy flows from a well that will never run dry.

**136:12**  
Deut 4:34  
Ps 44:3

**136:13**  
Exod 14:21  
Ps 78:13

**136:14**  
Ps 106:9

**136:16**  
Exod 13:18  
Deut 8:15

**136:17**  
Ps 135:10-12

**136:21**  
Josh 12:1

**136:22**  
Isa 41:8; 45:4

**136:23**  
Pss 9:12; 106:45

**136:24**  
Judg 6:9

**136:25**  
Pss 104:27; 145:15

**136:26**  
2 Chr 36:23  
Ezra 3:11

**137:1**  
Neh 1:4  
Ezek 1:1, 3

**137:2**  
Ezek 26:13

**137:3**  
2 Chr 29:27  
Neh 12:46

**137:6**  
Ezek 3:26

<sup>12</sup>With a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

<sup>13</sup>To him which divided the Red sea into parts: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

<sup>14</sup>And made Israel to pass through the midst of it: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

<sup>15</sup>But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

<sup>16</sup>To him which led his people through the wilderness: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

<sup>17</sup>To him which smote great kings: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

<sup>18</sup>And slew famous kings: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

<sup>19</sup>Sihon king of the Amorites: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

<sup>20</sup>And Og the king of Bashan: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

<sup>21</sup>And gave their land for an heritage: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

<sup>22</sup>Even an heritage unto Israel his servant: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

<sup>23</sup>Who remembered us in our low estate: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

<sup>24</sup>And hath redeemed us from our enemies: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

<sup>25</sup>Who giveth food to all flesh: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

<sup>26</sup>O give thanks unto the God of heaven: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

**Theme:** A person in exile weeps over the bitterness of captivity. Our sorrow can make it difficult to imagine singing joyful songs again.

**Author:** Anonymous

**137** <sup>1</sup>By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.

<sup>2</sup>We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.

<sup>3</sup>For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us *required of us* mirth, *saying*, Sing us *one* of the songs of Zion.

<sup>4</sup>How shall we sing the LORD's song in a strange land?

<sup>5</sup>If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget *her cunning*.

<sup>6</sup>If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

**136:12** *stretched out:* outstretched. **137:3** *wasted:* plundered. *mirth:* joy. **137:4** *strange:* foreign. **137:5** *cunning:* skill. **137:6** *cleave:* cling.

## ANGER AND VENGEANCE IN THE BOOK OF PSALMS

Several psalms shock those familiar with New Testament teachings. The psalm writers didn't hesitate to demand God's justice and make vivid suggestions on how he might carry it out. Apparently, no subject was unsuitable for discussion with God, but our tendency is to avoid the subjects of anger and vengeance in the book of Psalms.

To understand the words of anger and vengeance, we need to understand several things:

(1) The judgments asked for are to be carried out by God, and are written out of intense personal and national suffering. The people are unable or unwilling to take vengeance themselves and are asking God to intervene. Because few of us have suffered intense cruelty on a personal or national level, we find it difficult to grasp these outbursts.

(2) These writers were intimately aware of God's justice. Some of their words are efforts to vividly imagine what God might allow to happen to those who had harmed his people.

(3) If we dared to write down our thoughts while being unjustly attacked or suffering cruelty, we might be shocked at our own bold desire for vengeance. We would be surprised at how much we have in common with these ancient writers. They did not have Jesus' command to pray for one's enemies, but they did point to the right place to start. We are challenged to return good for evil, but until we respond to this challenge, we will not know how much we need God's help in order to forgive others.

(4) There is a helpful parallel between the psalms of anger and the psalms of vengeance. The "angry" psalms are intense and graphic, but they are directed at God. He is boldly told how disappointing it is when he turns his back on his people or acts too slowly. But while these thoughts and feelings were sincerely expressed, we know from the psalms themselves that these passing feelings were followed by renewed confidence in God's faithfulness. It is reasonable to expect the same of the "vengeance" psalms. We read, for example, David's angry outburst against Saul's pursuit in Psalm 59, yet we know that David never took personal vengeance on Saul. The psalm writers freely spoke their minds to God, having confidence that he could sort out what was meant and what was felt. Pray with that same confidence—God can be trusted with your heart.

Selected psalms that emphasize these themes are 10, 23, 28, 35, 59, 69, 109, 137, 139, and 140.

<sup>7</sup>Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, *Rase it, rase it, even* to the foundation thereof.

<sup>8</sup>O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy *shall he be*, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us.

<sup>9</sup>Happy *shall he be*, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.

**Theme:** Thanksgiving for answered prayer. God works out his plans for our lives and will bring us through the difficulties we face.

**Author:** David

## 138 *A Psalm of David*

<sup>1</sup>I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.

<sup>2</sup>I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.

<sup>3</sup>In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, *and* strengthenedst me *with* strength in my soul.

<sup>4</sup>All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O LORD, when they hear the words of thy mouth.

<sup>5</sup>Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the LORD: for great *is* the glory of the LORD.

<sup>6</sup>Though the LORD *be* high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.

<sup>7</sup>Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me.

<sup>8</sup>The LORD will perfect *that which* concerneth me: thy mercy, O LORD, *endureth* for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands.

**Theme:** God is all-seeing, all-knowing, all-holy, all-present. God knows us. God is with us, and his greatest gift is to allow us to know him.

**Author:** David

## 139 *To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David*

<sup>1</sup>O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known *me*.

<sup>2</sup>Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.

<sup>3</sup>Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted *with* all my ways.

<sup>4</sup>For *there is* not a word in my tongue, *but*, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.

<sup>5</sup>Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.

<sup>6</sup>*Such* knowledge *is* too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot *attain* unto it.

<sup>7</sup>Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

**137:7** *rase it*: tear it down. **138:2** *magnified*: exalted. **139:3** *compassest*: comprehend. **139:5** *beset me*: hemmed me in.

**137:7**  
Jer 49:7-22  
Ezek 25:12-14  
Obad 1:10-14

**137:8**  
Isa 13:1-22; 47:1-15  
Jer 50:1-46; 51:1-64

**138:1**  
Pss 95:3; 96:4;  
111:1

**138:2**  
Ps 5:7

**138:3**  
Pss 28:7; 46:1;  
118:5

**138:4**  
Ps 102:15

**138:6**  
Pss 101:5; 113:4-7  
Prov 3:34  
Jas 4:6

**138:7**  
Exod 15:12  
Ezra 9:8-9  
Pss 20:6; 23:4;  
71:20

**138:8**  
Job 10:3  
Pss 27:9; 71:9  
Phil 1:6

**139:1**  
Ps 44:21

**139:2**  
Ps 94:11

**139:3**  
Job 14:16

**139:4**  
Heb 4:13

**139:5**  
Ps 34:7

**139:6**  
Job 42:3  
Rom 11:33

**139:7**  
Jer 23:24

**137:7** The Edomites were related to the Israelites, both nations descending from Isaac and his father Abraham. Although Israel shared its southern border with Edom, there was bitter hatred between the two nations. The Edomites did not come to help when the city of Jerusalem was besieged by the Babylonian army. In fact, they rejoiced when the city was destroyed (Jeremiah 49:7–22; Joel 3:19; Obadiah 1:1–21).

**137:8, 9** God destroyed Babylon and its offspring for their proud assault against God and his Kingdom. The Medes and Persians destroyed Babylon in 539 B.C. Many of those who were oppressed lived to see the victory. The phrase about the “little ones” is harsh because the writer is crying out for judgment: “Treat the Babylonians the way they treated us.”

**138:1** “Before the gods” may mean in the presence of subordinate heavenly beings (angels), or, more likely, it may be a statement ridiculing the kings or gods of the heathen nations. God is the highest in the whole earth.

**138:1–3** Thanksgiving should be an integral part of our lives. This theme is woven throughout the psalms. As we thank God for

material and spiritual blessings, we should also thank him for answered prayer. Remember when you asked God for protection, strength, comfort, patience, love, or other special needs and he supplied them? Beware of taking God’s provision and answered prayer for granted.

**138:8** Every person dreams and makes plans for the future and then works hard to see those dreams and plans come true. But to truly make the most of life, we must include God’s plan in our plans. He alone knows what is best for us; he alone can “perfect that which concerneth me.” As you make plans and dream dreams, talk with God about them.

**139:1–5** Sometimes we don’t let people get to know us completely because we are afraid they will discover something about us they won’t like. But God already knows everything about us, even to the number of hairs on our heads (Matthew 10:30), and still he accepts and loves us. He is with us through every situation, in every trial—protecting, loving, guiding. He knows and loves us completely.

**139:7** God is omnipresent—he is present everywhere. Because this is so, you can never be lost to his Spirit. This is good news to

**139:8**  
Prov 15:11  
Amos 9:2-4

**139:10**  
Ps 23:2-3

**139:11**  
Job 22:13

**139:12**  
Job 34:22  
Dan 2:22  
1 Jn 1:5

**139:13**  
Ps 119:73

**139:15**  
Job 10:8-10  
Eccl 11:5

**139:16**  
Job 14:5  
Ps 56:8

**139:17**  
Ps 40:5

**139:19**  
Isa 11:4

**139:20**  
Exod 20:7  
Deut 5:11

**139:23**  
Ps 26:2

**139:24**  
Pss 5:8; 16:11;  
143:10

<sup>8</sup>If I ascend up into heaven, thou *art* there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou *art there*.

<sup>9</sup>If I take the wings of the morning, *and* dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

<sup>10</sup>Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

<sup>11</sup>If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.

<sup>12</sup>Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light *are* both alike *to thee*.

<sup>13</sup>For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.

<sup>14</sup>I will praise thee; for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made: marvellous *are* thy works; and *that* my soul knoweth right well.

<sup>15</sup>My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, *and* curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

<sup>16</sup>Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all *my members* were written, *which* in continuance were fashioned, when *as yet there was* none of them.

<sup>17</sup>How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!

<sup>18</sup>If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.

<sup>19</sup>Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God: depart from me therefore, ye bloody men.

<sup>20</sup>For they speak against thee wickedly, *and* thine enemies take *thy name* in vain.

<sup>21</sup>Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?

<sup>22</sup>I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.

<sup>23</sup>Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:

<sup>24</sup>And see if *there be any* wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

**Theme:** Prayer for protection against those who slander or threaten. Deliverance begins as we focus on our future life with God.

**Author:** David

## 140 *To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David*

**140:1**  
Ps 17:13

**140:2**  
Ps 56:6  
Prov 6:14  
Isa 59:4

**140:3**  
Rom 3:13  
Jas 3:8

**140:4**  
Ps 71:4

**140:5**  
Job 18:9  
Pss 35:7; 57:6

**140:6**  
Esth 9:25  
Ps 112:10

**140:7**  
Pss 28:8; 144:10

**140:8**  
Ps 112:10

<sup>1</sup>Deliver me, O LORD, from the evil man: preserve me from the violent man;

<sup>2</sup>Which imagine mischiefs in *their* heart; continually are they gathered together *for* war.

<sup>3</sup>They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders' poison *is* under their lips. Selah.

<sup>4</sup>Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked; preserve me from the violent man; who have purposed to overthrow my goings.

<sup>5</sup>The proud have hid a snare for me, and cords; they have spread a net by the wayside; they have set gins for me. Selah.

<sup>6</sup>I said unto the LORD, Thou *art* my God: hear the voice of my supplications, O LORD.

<sup>7</sup>O GOD the Lord, the strength of my salvation, thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.

<sup>8</sup>Grant not, O LORD, the desires of the wicked: further not his wicked device; *lest* they exalt themselves. Selah.

**139:13** possessed my reins: formed my innermost parts. covered me: knit me together. **139:15** substance: frame. curiously wrought: skillfully fashioned. **139:16** unperfect: unformed. **139:20** take thy name in vain: misuse your name. **139:22** perfect: complete. **140:2** imagine mischiefs: devise evil plans. **140:3** adders' poison is under: vipers' poison is on. **140:4** overthrow my goings: trip my feet. **140:5** gins: traps. **140:6** the voice of my supplications: my cry for mercy. **140:7** covered: shielded. **140:8** device: plan.

those who know and love God, because no matter what we do or where we go, we can never be far from God's comforting presence (see Romans 8:35-39).

**139:13-15** God's character goes into the creation of every person. When you feel worthless or even begin to hate yourself, remember that God's Spirit is ready and willing to work within you. God thinks of you constantly (139:17, 18). We should have as much respect for ourselves as our Maker has for us.

**139:21-24** David's hatred of his enemies came from his zeal for God. David regarded his enemies as God's enemies, so his hatred was a desire for God's righteous justice and not for personal vengeance. Is it all right to be angry with people who hate God? Yes, but we must remember that it is God who will deal with them, not us. If we truly love God, then we will be deeply

hurt if someone hates him. David asked God to search his heart and mind and point out any wrong motives that may have been behind his strong words. But while we seek justice against evil, we must also pray that God's enemies will turn to him before he judges them (see Matthew 5:44).

**139:23, 24** David asked God to search for sin and point it out, even to the level of testing his thoughts. This is exploratory surgery for sin. How are we to recognize sin unless God points it out? Then when God shows us, we can repent and be forgiven. Make this verse your prayer. If you ask the Lord to search your heart and your thoughts to reveal sin in your life, you will be continuing in God's everlasting way.



<sup>9</sup>As for the head of those that compass me about, let the mischief of their own lips cover them.

<sup>10</sup>Let burning coals fall upon them: let them be cast into the fire; into deep pits, that they rise not up again.

<sup>11</sup>Let not an evil speaker be established in the earth: evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow *him*.

<sup>12</sup>I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted, *and* the right of the poor.

<sup>13</sup>Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name: the upright shall dwell in thy presence.

**140:9**  
Ps 7:16

**140:10**  
Pss 11:6; 21:9  
Matt 3:10

**140:11**  
Ps 34:21

**140:12**  
Pss 9:4; 35:10

**140:13**  
Pss 16:11; 17:15;  
97:12

**Theme:** A prayer for help when facing temptation. David asks God to protect him and to give him wisdom in accepting criticism. Be open to honest criticism—God may be speaking to you through others.

**Author:** David

## 141 *A Psalm of David*

<sup>1</sup>LORD, I cry unto thee: make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee.

<sup>2</sup>Let my prayer be set forth before thee *as* incense; *and* the lifting up of my hands *as* the evening sacrifice.

<sup>3</sup>Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.

<sup>4</sup>Incline not my heart to *any* evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties.

<sup>5</sup>Let the righteous smite me; *it shall be* a kindness: and let him reprove me; *it shall be* an excellent oil, *which* shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also *shall be* in their calamities.

<sup>6</sup>When their judges are overthrown in stony places, they shall hear my words; for they are sweet.

<sup>7</sup>Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth *wood* upon the earth.

<sup>8</sup>But mine eyes *are* unto thee, O God the Lord: in thee is my trust; leave not my soul destitute.

<sup>9</sup>Keep me from the snares *which* they have laid for me, and the gins of the workers of iniquity.

<sup>10</sup>Let the wicked fall into their own nets, whilst that I withal escape.

**141:1**  
Ps 70:5

**141:2**  
Exod 29:41; 30:8  
Rev 5:8; 8:3-4

**141:3**  
Ps 39:1  
Prov 13:3; 21:23

**141:4**  
Ps 119:36  
Prov 23:6  
Mal 3:15

**141:5**  
Ps 23:5  
Prov 9:8; 19:25;  
27:6  
Gal 6:1

**141:7**  
Ps 53:5

**141:8**  
Ps 11:1

**141:9**  
Ps 91:3

**141:10**  
Ps 35:8

**Theme:** A prayer when overwhelmed and desperate. When we feel cornered by our enemies, only God can keep us safe.

**Author:** David

## 142 *Maschil of David; A Prayer when he was in the cave*

<sup>1</sup>I cried unto the LORD with my voice; with my voice unto the LORD did I make my supplication.

<sup>2</sup>I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble.

**140:9** compass: surround. *mischief*: evil. **140:11** an evil speaker: a slanderer. **141:3** watch: guard. *keep*: watch over. **141:4** dainties: delicacies. **141:5** smite: strike. **141:6** overthrown in stony places: thrown down from the cliffs. **141:7** cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth: plows and breaks up the earth. **141:9** gins: traps. **141:10** whilst that I withal escape: while I pass by safely. **142:1** make my supplication: plead for mercy.

**142:1**  
Pss 30:8; 77:1

**140:12** To whom can the poor turn when they are persecuted? They lack the money to get professional help; they may be unable to defend themselves. But there is always someone on their side—the Lord will stand by them and ultimately bring about justice. This should be a comfort for us all. No matter what our situation may be, the Lord is with us. But this truth should also call us to live responsibly with others. We as God's people are required to defend the rights of the powerless.

**141:3** James wrote that "the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" (James 3:5). On the average, a person opens his mouth approximately 700 times a day to speak. David wisely asked God to help him keep his mouth shut—sometimes even

as he underwent persecution. Jesus himself was silent before his accusers (Matthew 26:63). Knowing the power of the tongue, we would do well to ask God to guard what we say so that our words will bring honor to his name.

**141:4** Evil acts begin with evil desires. It isn't enough to ask God to keep you away from temptation, make you stronger, or change your circumstances. You must ask him to change your desires.

**141:5** Nobody really likes criticism, but everybody can benefit from it when it is given wisely and taken humbly. David suggested how to accept criticism: (1) Don't refuse it, (2) consider it a kindness, and (3) keep quiet (don't fight back). Putting these suggestions into practice will help you control how you react to criticism, making it productive rather than destructive, no matter how it was originally intended.



142:3  
Ps 140:5

<sup>3</sup>When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me.

142:4  
Ps 88:8  
Jer 30:17

<sup>4</sup>I looked on *my* right hand, and beheld, but *there was* no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.

142:5  
Ps 91:2, 9

<sup>5</sup>I cried unto thee, O LORD: I said, Thou *art* my refuge *and* my portion in the land of the living.

142:6  
Pss 18:17; 79:8

<sup>6</sup>Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I.

142:7  
Ps 13:6

<sup>7</sup>Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.

**Theme:** A prayer in the midst of hopelessness and depression. Our prayers should fit into what we know is consistent with God's character and plans.

**Author:** David

## 143 *A Psalm of David*

143:1  
Ps 140:6

<sup>1</sup>Hear my prayer, O LORD, give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, *and* in thy righteousness.

143:2  
Job 14:3; 22:4

<sup>2</sup>And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.

143:3  
Lam 3:6

<sup>3</sup>For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead.

143:4  
Lam 3:11

<sup>4</sup>Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate.

143:5  
Ps 77:5, 10-11

<sup>5</sup>I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands.

143:6  
Ps 63:1

<sup>6</sup>I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul *thirsteth* after thee, as a thirsty land. Selah.

143:7  
Pss 69:17; 88:4

<sup>7</sup>Hear me speedily, O LORD: my spirit faileth: hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit.

143:8  
Ps 32:8

<sup>8</sup>Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee.

143:9  
Ps 59:1

<sup>9</sup>Deliver me, O LORD, from mine enemies: I flee unto thee to hide me.

143:10  
Neh 9:20  
Pss 23:3; 119:12

<sup>10</sup>Teach me to do thy will; for thou *art* my God: thy spirit *is* good; lead me into the land of uprightness.

<sup>11</sup>Quicken me, O LORD, for thy name's sake: for thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble.

<sup>12</sup>And of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul: for I *am* thy servant.

**Theme:** Rejoicing in God's care. Whether in times of prosperity or adversity, happy are those whose God is the Lord.

**Author:** David

## 144 *A Psalm of David*

144:1  
Ps 18:2

<sup>1</sup>Blessed *be* the LORD my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, *and* my fingers to fight:

<sup>2</sup>My goodness, and my fortress; my high tower, and my deliverer; my shield, and *he* in whom I trust; who subdueth my people under me.

142:3 *privily*: secretly. 142:7 *compass*: surround. 143:1 *supplications*: cry for mercy. 143:3 *smitten*: crushed. 143:11 *quicken me*: revive me.

**142:4, 5** Have you ever felt that no one cared what happened to you? David had good reason to feel that way, and he wrote, "I cried unto thee, O LORD." Through prayer we can pull out of our tailspin and be reminded that God cares for us deeply.

**142:7** This psalm was written when David was hiding from Saul in caves like the ones at Adullam (1 Samuel 22) or En-gedi (1 Samuel 24). These may have seemed like prisons to him because of the confinement.

**143:7** David was losing hope, caught in a deep depression that was paralyzing him with fear. At times, we feel caught in deepening

depression, and we are unable to pull ourselves out. At those times, we can come to the Lord and, like David, express our true feelings. Then he will help us as we remember his miracles (143:5), reach out to him (143:6), trust him (143:8), and decide to do his will (143:10).

**143:10** David's prayer was for knowledge to do God's will, not his own. A prayer for guidance is self-centered if it doesn't recognize God's power to redirect our lives. Asking God to restructure our priorities awakens our minds and stirs our wills.

<sup>3</sup>LORD, what *is* man, that thou takest knowledge of him! *or* the son of man, that thou makest account of him!

<sup>4</sup>Man is like to vanity: his days *are* as a shadow that passeth away.

<sup>5</sup>Bow thy heavens, O LORD, and come down: touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.

<sup>6</sup>Cast forth lightning, and scatter them: shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them.

<sup>7</sup>Send thine hand from above; rid me, and deliver me out of great waters, from the hand of strange children;

<sup>8</sup>Whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand *is* a right hand of falsehood.

<sup>9</sup>I will sing a new song unto thee, O God: upon a psaltery *and* an instrument of ten strings will I sing praises unto thee.

<sup>10</sup>*It is* he that giveth salvation unto kings: who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword.

<sup>11</sup>Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand *is* a right hand of falsehood:

<sup>12</sup>That our sons *may be* as plants grown up in their youth; *that* our daughters *may be* as corner stones, polished *after* the similitude of a palace:

<sup>13</sup>*That* our garners *may be* full, affording all manner of store: *that* our sheep may bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets:

<sup>14</sup>*That* our oxen *may be* strong to labour; *that there be* no breaking in, nor going out; *that there be* no complaining in our streets.

<sup>15</sup>Happy *is that* people, that is in such a case: *yea*, happy *is that* people, whose God *is the* LORD.

144:3  
Ps 8:4

144:4  
Job 8:9; 14:2  
Pss 39:11; 109:23

144:5  
Ps 18:9  
Isa 64:1

144:6  
Hab 3:11  
Zech 9:14

144:7  
Pss 18:44; 69:1, 14

144:8  
Deut 32:40  
Pss 12:2; 41:6  
Isa 44:20

144:9  
Ps 40:3

144:10  
2 Sam 18:7  
Ps 140:7

144:11  
Ps 12:2  
Isa 44:20

144:12  
Ps 92:12-14  
Prov 3:9-10  
Song 4:4; 7:4

144:14  
2 Kgs 25:11  
Isa 24:11  
Jer 14:2

**Theme:** A time will come when all people will join together in recognizing and worshiping God. Because God is full of love, he satisfies all who trust in him.

**Author:** David

## 145 *David's Psalm of praise*

<sup>1</sup>I will extol thee, my God, O king; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever.

<sup>2</sup>Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever.

<sup>3</sup>Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness *is* unsearchable.

<sup>4</sup>One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts.

<sup>5</sup>I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works.

<sup>6</sup>And *men* shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts: and I will declare thy greatness.

<sup>7</sup>They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness.

<sup>8</sup>The LORD *is* gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.

<sup>9</sup>The LORD *is* good to all: and his tender mercies *are* over all his works.

<sup>10</sup>All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD; and thy saints shall bless thee.

<sup>11</sup>They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power;

<sup>12</sup>To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom.

<sup>13</sup>Thy kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion *endureth* throughout all generations.

<sup>14</sup>The LORD upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all *those that be* bowed down.

145:3  
Rom 11:33

145:4  
Isa 38:19

145:5  
Ps 119:27

145:6  
Deut 10:21; 32:3

145:7  
Ps 51:14  
Isa 63:7

145:8  
Exod 34:6

145:9  
Ps 100:5  
Nah 1:7  
Matt 19:17  
Mark 10:18

145:10  
Pss 19:1; 68:26

145:12  
Ps 105:1  
Isa 2:10, 19, 21

145:13  
2 Pet 1:11

144:3 *makest account*: think. 144:4 *to vanity*: a breath. 144:7 *rid*: rescue. *strange children*: foreigners. 144:8 *vanity*: lies. 144:9 *psaltery and an instrument*: lyre. 144:12 *corner stones*: pillars. *polished after the similitude of*: sculptured as for. 144:13 *garners*: barns. *affording all manner of store*: providing all kinds of produce. 144:14 *complaining*: cry of distress. 145:6 *terrible*: awesome.

**144:3, 4** Life is short. David reminded us that it “is like to vanity” and that our “days are as a shadow that passeth away.” James said that our lives are “a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away” (James 4:14). Because life is short, we should live for God while we have the time. Don’t waste your life by selecting an inferior purpose that has no lasting value. Live for God, who alone can make your life worthwhile, purposeful, and meaningful.

**145:14** Sometimes our burdens seem more than we can bear, and we wonder how we can go on. The psalmist stands at this

bleak intersection of life’s road and points toward the Lord, the great burden bearer. God is able to lift us up because he (1) is great beyond discovery (145:3); (2) does mighty acts across many generations (145:4); (3) is full of glorious honor and majesty (145:5); (4) does wondrous works and terrible acts (145:5, 6); (5) is righteous (145:7); (6) is gracious, compassionate, patient, and merciful (145:8); (7) reaches out to us with tenderness (145:9); (8) rules over an everlasting Kingdom (145:13); (9) is our source in all our daily needs (145:15, 16); (10) is righteous and holy in all his dealings (145:17); (11) remains close to those who call on him (145:18);

145:15  
Ps 104:27

145:18  
Deut 4:7  
John 4:24

145:19  
Ps 10:17  
Prov 15:29

145:20  
Pss 31:23; 37:38

145:21  
Pss 71:8; 150:6

<sup>15</sup>The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season.

<sup>16</sup>Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.

<sup>17</sup>The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.

<sup>18</sup>The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.

<sup>19</sup>He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them.

<sup>20</sup>The LORD preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy.

<sup>21</sup>My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD: and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.

**Theme:** The help of man versus the help of God. Help from man is temporal and unstable, but help from God is lasting and complete.

**Author:** Anonymous

146:1  
Ps 103:1

146:2  
Pss 63:4; 104:33

146:3  
Ps 60:11

146:4  
Pss 33:10; 104:29  
Eccl 12:7

146:5  
Ps 71:5

146:6  
Acts 14:15

146:7  
Ps 68:6

146:8  
Matt 9:30  
John 9:7

146:9  
Exod 22:21  
Lev 19:34  
Deut 10:18

146:10  
Ps 10:16

**146** <sup>1</sup>Praise ye the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul.

<sup>2</sup>While I live will I praise the LORD: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.

<sup>3</sup>Put not your trust in princes, *nor* in the son of man, in whom *there is* no help.

<sup>4</sup>His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

<sup>5</sup>Happy *is he* that *hath* the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope *is* in the LORD his God:

<sup>6</sup>Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein *is*: which keepeth truth for ever:

<sup>7</sup>Which executeth judgment for the oppressed: which giveth food to the hungry. The LORD looseth the prisoners:

<sup>8</sup>The LORD openeth *the eyes of* the blind: the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down: the LORD loveth the righteous:

<sup>9</sup>The LORD preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.

<sup>10</sup>The LORD shall reign for ever, *even* thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the LORD.

145:15 *meat*: food. 145:20 *preserveth*: protects. 146:7 *judgment*: justice. *looseth*: gives freedom to.

## PRAISE IN THE BOOK OF PSALMS

Most of the psalms are prayers, and most of the prayers include praise to God. Praise expresses admiration, appreciation, and thanks. Praise in the book of Psalms is often directed to God, and just as often the praise is shared with others. Considering all that God has done and does for us, what could be more natural than outbursts of heartfelt praise?

As you read Psalms, note the praise given to God, not only for what he does—his creation, his blessings, his forgiveness—but also for who he is—loving, just, faithful, forgiving, patient. Note also those times when the praise of God is shared with others, and they, too, are encouraged to praise him. In what ways have you recently praised God or told others all that he has done for you?

Selected psalms that emphasize this theme are 8, 19, 30, 65, 84, 96, 100, 136, 145, and 150.

(12) listens to our cries and saves us (145:19, 20). If you are bending under a burden and feel that you are about to fall, turn to God for help. He is ready to lift you up and bear your burden.

**146—150** These last five psalms overflow with praise. Each begins and ends with “Praise ye the LORD.” They show us where, why, and how to praise God. What does praise do? (1) Praise takes our minds off our problems and shortcomings, and helps us focus them on God. (2) Praise leads us from individual meditation to corporate worship. (3) Praise causes us to consider and appreciate God’s character. (4) Praise lifts our perspective from the earthly to the heavenly. (5) Praise prepares our hearts to receive God’s love and the power of his Holy Spirit.

**146:3–8** The writer portrays man as an inadequate savior, a false hope; even the princes cannot deliver (146:3). God is the hope and the help of the needy. Jesus affirms his concern for the poor and afflicted in Luke 4:18–21; 7:21–23. He does not

separate the physical and spiritual needs of people, but attends to both. While God, not the government, is the hope of the needy, we are his instruments to help here on earth.

**146:9** God’s plans seem topsy-turvy to our society. Jesus turned society’s values upside down when he proclaimed that “many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first” (Matthew 19:30), and that “whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it” (Matthew 16:25). Don’t be surprised when others don’t understand your Christian values, but don’t give in to theirs. Instead, be like the early Christians who turned their world “upside down” (Acts 17:6).

**Theme:** What gives God joy. Although God created everything, his greatest joy comes from our genuine worship and trust.

**Author:** Anonymous, written when the exiles returned to Jerusalem

**147** <sup>1</sup>Praise ye the LORD: for *it is* good to sing praises unto our God; for *it is* pleasant; *and* praise is comely.

<sup>2</sup>The LORD doth build up Jerusalem: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.

<sup>3</sup>He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.

<sup>4</sup>He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by *their* names.

<sup>5</sup>Great is our LORD, and of great power: his understanding *is* infinite.

<sup>6</sup>The LORD lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground.

<sup>7</sup>Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God:

<sup>8</sup>Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.

<sup>9</sup>He giveth to the beast his food, *and* to the young ravens which cry.

<sup>10</sup>He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man.

<sup>11</sup>The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.

<sup>12</sup>Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Zion.

<sup>13</sup>For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates; he hath blessed thy children within thee.

<sup>14</sup>He maketh peace *in* thy borders, *and* filleth thee with the finest of the wheat.

<sup>15</sup>He sendeth forth his commandment *upon* earth: his word runneth very swiftly.

<sup>16</sup>He giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes.

<sup>17</sup>He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold?

<sup>18</sup>He sendeth out his word, and melteth them: he causeth his wind to blow, *and* the waters flow.

<sup>19</sup>He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel.

<sup>20</sup>He hath not dealt so with any nation: *and as for his* judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the LORD.

**Theme:** Let all creation praise and worship the Lord.

**Author:** Anonymous

**148** <sup>1</sup>Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens: praise him in the heights.

<sup>2</sup>Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts.

<sup>3</sup>Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light.

<sup>4</sup>Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that *be* above the heavens.

<sup>5</sup>Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created.

<sup>6</sup>He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass.

<sup>7</sup>Praise the LORD from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps:

<sup>8</sup>Fire, and hail; snow, and vapours; stormy wind fulfilling his word:

<sup>9</sup>Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars:

<sup>10</sup>Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl:

<sup>11</sup>Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth:

<sup>12</sup>Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children:

**147:1** *comely*: beautiful. **147:4** *telleth*: counts. **147:16** *hoarfrost*: frost. **147:17** *forth his ice like morsels*: down his hailstones. **148:6** *stablished*: established. **148:7** *ye dragons*: you great sea creatures. *deeps*: ocean depths.

**147:1**

Pss 33:1; 135:3

**147:2**

Isa 11:12; 56:8

Ezek 39:28

**147:4**

Gen 15:5

Isa 40:26

**147:5**

Ps 98:1

Isa 40:28

**147:8**

Job 5:10; 26:8;

38:26

**147:9**

Job 38:41

Ps 104:27

**147:10**

1 Sam 16:7

Ps 33:17

**147:13**

Neh 3:3; 7:3

**147:14**

Deut 32:14

Isa 54:13; 60:17-18

**147:15**

Job 37:12

Ps 104:4

**147:19**

Deut 33:3-4

Mal 4:4

**147:20**

Deut 4:7-8

Ps 79:6

**148:1**

Ps 102:19

**148:2**

Ps 103:20-21

**148:4**

Gen 1:7

Deut 10:14

**148:5**

Gen 1:1

**148:6**

Job 38:33

**148:7**

Gen 1:21

Ps 74:13

Hab 3:10

**148:9**

Isa 44:23; 49:13;

55:12

**147:5** Sometimes we feel as if we don't understand ourselves—what we want, how we feel, what's wrong with us, or what we should do about it. But God's understanding is infinite, and therefore he understands us fully. If you feel troubled and don't understand yourself, remember that God understands you perfectly. Take your mind off yourself and focus it on God. Strive to become more and more like him. The more you learn about God and his ways, the better you will understand yourself.

**147:10, 11** We may spend much of our lives trying to sharpen our skills or increase our strength. There is nothing wrong with doing so, and, in fact, our gifts can be used to glorify God. But when we use our skills with no regard for God, they are indeed worth little. It is our *fear* (reverence) and hope that God desires.

When he has those, then he will use our skills and strengths in ways far greater than we can imagine.

**147:19, 20** The nation of Israel was special to God because to its people God brought his laws, and through its people he sent his Son, Jesus Christ. Now any individual who follows God is just as special to him. In fact, the Bible says that the real nation of Israel is not a specific people or geographic place, but the community of all who believe in and obey God (see Galatians 3:28, 29).

**148:5-14** All creation is like a majestic symphony or a great choir composed of many harmonious parts that together offer up songs of praise. Each part (independent, yet part of the whole) is caught up and carried along in the swelling tides of praise. This is a picture of how we as believers should praise God—individually,

**148:13**  
Pss 8:1; 113:4  
Rev 5:12

**148:14**  
Deut 10:21  
1 Sam 2:1  
Eph 2:17

<sup>13</sup>Let them praise the name of the LORD: for his name alone is excellent; his glory *is* above the earth and heaven.

<sup>14</sup>He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; *even* of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the LORD.

**Theme:** A victory celebration. We have the assurance that God truly enjoys his people.

**Author:** Anonymous

**149:1**  
Pss 33:3; 89:5

**149:2**  
Judg 8:23  
Ps 47:6

**149:3**  
Exod 15:20

**149** <sup>1</sup>Praise ye the LORD. Sing unto the LORD a new song, *and* his praise in the congregation of saints.

<sup>2</sup>Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.

<sup>3</sup>Let them praise his name in the dance: let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp.

**149:3** *timbrel:* tambourine.

**WHERE TO GET  
HELP IN THE  
BOOK OF  
PSALMS**

*When you feel . . .*

Afraid: 3; 4; 27; 46; 49; 56;  
91; 118

Alone: 9; 10; 12; 13; 27; 40; 43

"Burned out": 6; 63

Cheated: 41

Confused: 10; 12; 73

Depressed: 27; 34; 42;  
43; 88; 143

Distressed: 13; 25; 31; 40; 107

Elated: 19; 96

Guilty: 19; 32; 38; 51

Hateful: 11

Impatient: 13; 27; 37; 40

Insecure: 3; 5; 12; 91

Insulted: 41; 70

Jealous: 37

Like quitting: 29; 43; 145

Lost: 23; 139

Overwhelmed: 25; 69; 142

Penitent/Sorry: 32; 51; 66

Proud: 14; 30; 49

Purposeless: 14; 25; 39; 49; 90

Sad: 13

Self-confident: 24

Tense: 4

Thankful: 118; 136; 138

Threatened: 3; 11; 17

Tired/Weak: 6; 13; 18; 28; 29;  
40; 86

Trapped: 7; 17; 42; 88; 142

Unimportant: 8; 90; 139

Vengeful: 3; 7; 109

Worried: 37

Worshipful: 8; 19; 27; 29; 150

*When you're facing . . .*

Atheists: 10; 14; 19;  
52; 53; 115

Competition: 133

Criticism: 35; 56; 120

Danger: 11

Death: 6; 71; 90

Decisions: 1; 119

Discrimination: 54

Doubts: 34; 37; 94

Evil people: 10; 35; 36;  
49; 52; 109; 140

Enemies: 3; 25; 35;  
41; 56; 59

Heresy: 14

Hypocrisy: 26; 28;  
40; 50

Illness: 6; 139

Lies: 5; 12; 120

Old age: 71; 92

Persecution: 1; 3; 7; 56

Poverty: 9; 10; 12

Punishment: 6; 38; 39

Slander/Insults: 7; 15;  
35; 43; 120

Slaughter: 6; 46; 83

Sorrow: 23; 34

Success: 18; 112;  
127; 128

Temptation: 38; 141

Troubles: 34; 55; 86;  
102; 142; 145

Verbal cruelty: 35; 120

*When you want . . .*

Acceptance: 139

Answers: 4; 17

Confidence: 46; 71

Courage: 11; 42

Fellowship with God: 5; 16; 25; 27;  
37; 133

Forgiveness: 32; 38; 40; 51; 69;  
86; 103; 130

Friendship: 16

Godliness: 15; 25

Guidance: 1; 5; 15; 19; 25; 32; 48

Healing: 6; 41

Hope: 16; 17; 18; 23; 27

Humility: 19; 147

Illumination: 19

Integrity: 24; 25

Joy: 9; 16; 28; 126

Justice: 2; 7; 14; 26; 37; 49; 58; 82

Knowledge: 2; 8; 18; 19; 25; 29;  
97; 103

Leadership: 72

Miracles: 60; 111

Money: 15; 16; 17; 49

Peace: 3; 4

Perspective: 2; 11

Prayer: 5; 17; 27; 61

Protection: 3; 4; 7; 16; 17; 18; 23;  
27; 31; 91; 121; 125

Provision: 23

Rest: 23; 27

Salvation: 26; 37; 49; 126

Stability: 11; 33; 46

Vindication: 9; 14; 28; 35; 109

Wisdom: 1; 16; 19; 64; 111

yet as part of the great choir of believers worldwide. Are you singing your part well in the worldwide choir of praise?

**149:3-5** Although the Bible invites us to praise God, we often aren't sure how to go about it. Here, several ways are

suggested—in the dance, with the voice, with musical instruments. God enjoys his people, and we should enjoy praising him.

<sup>4</sup>For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation.

<sup>5</sup>Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds.

<sup>6</sup>Let the high praises of God *be* in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand;

<sup>7</sup>To execute vengeance upon the heathen, *and* punishments upon the people;

<sup>8</sup>To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron;

<sup>9</sup>To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the

LORD.

**149:4**  
Ps 35:27

**149:5**  
Job 35:10

**149:6**  
Ps 66:17

**149:8**  
Nah 3:10

**149:9**  
Ps 148:14  
Ezek 28:26

**Theme:** A closing hymn of praise. God's creation praises him everywhere in every way. We should join this rejoicing song of praise.

**Author:** Anonymous

**150:1**  
Pss 19:1; 73:17;  
102:19

**150** <sup>1</sup>Praise ye the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power.

<sup>2</sup>Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness.

<sup>3</sup>Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp.

<sup>4</sup>Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs.

<sup>5</sup>Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals.

<sup>6</sup>Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD.

**150:2**  
Deut 3:24

**150:3**  
Ps 98:6

**150:4**  
Isa 38:20

**150:5**  
1 Chr 13:8; 15:16

**150:6**  
Ps 145:21

**149:7** *heathen:* nations. **149:8** *fetters:* shackles. **150:1** *in the firmament of his power:* in his mighty heavens.  
**150:3** *psaltery:* lyre. **150:4** *timbrel:* tambourine. *organs:* flutes. **150:5** *the high sounding:* resounding.

**149:6, 7** The two-edged sword symbolizes the completeness of judgment that will be executed by the Messiah when he returns to punish all evildoers (Revelation 1:16).

**150:3–5** Music and song were an integral part of Old Testament worship. David introduced music into the Tabernacle and Temple services (1 Chronicles 16:4–7). The music must have been loud and joyous as evidenced by the list of instruments and the presence of choirs and song leaders. Music was also important in New Testament worship (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).

**150:6** How could the message be more clear? The writer was telling the individual listeners to praise God. What a fitting way to end this book of praise—with a direct encouragement for *you* to praise God, too. Remember to praise him every day!

**150:6** In a way, the book of Psalms parallels our spiritual journey through life. It begins by presenting us with two roads—the way to life and the way to death. If we choose God's way to life, we still face both blessings and troubles, joy and grief, successes and obstacles. Throughout it all, God is at our side, guiding, encouraging, comforting, caring. As the wise and faithful person's life draws to an end, he or she realizes clearly that God's road is the right road. Knowing this will cause us to praise God for leading us in the right direction and for assuring our place in the perfect world God has in store for those who have faithfully followed him.



# JOHN

Herod  
the Great  
begins  
to rule  
37 B.C.

Jesus  
is born  
6/5 B.C.

Escape  
to Egypt  
5/4 B.C.

Herod  
the Great  
dies  
4 B.C.

Return  
to  
Nazareth  
4/3 B.C.

Judea  
becomes  
a Roman  
province  
A.D. 6

## VITAL STATISTICS

### PURPOSE:

To prove conclusively that Jesus is the Son of God and that all who believe in him will have eternal life

### AUTHOR:

John the apostle, son of Zebedee, brother of James, called a "Son of Thunder"

### ORIGINAL AUDIENCE:

New Christians and searching non-Christians

### DATE WRITTEN:

Probably A.D. 85–90

### SETTING:

Written after the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and before John's exile to the island of Patmos

### KEY VERSES:

"And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: 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" (20:30, 31).

### KEY PEOPLE:

Jesus, John the Baptist, the disciples, Mary, Martha, Lazarus, Jesus' mother, Pilate, Mary Magdalene

### KEY PLACES:

Judean countryside, Samaria, Galilee, Bethany, Jerusalem

### SPECIAL FEATURES:

Of the eight miracles recorded, six are unique (among the Gospels) to John, as is the "Upper Room Discourse" (chapters 14–17). Over 90 percent of John is unique to his Gospel—John does not contain a genealogy or any record of Jesus' birth, childhood, temptation, transfiguration, appointment of the disciples, nor any account of Jesus' parables, ascension, or Great Commission.



HE SPOKE, and galaxies whirled into place, stars burned the heavens, and planets began orbiting their suns—words of awesome, unlimited, unleashed power. He spoke again, and the waters and lands were filled with plants and creatures, running, swimming, growing, and multiplying—words of animating, breathing, pulsing life. Again he spoke, and man and woman were formed, thinking, speaking, and loving—words of personal and

creative glory. Eternal, infinite, unlimited—he was, is, and always will be the Maker and Lord of all that exists.

And then he came in the flesh to a speck in the universe called planet Earth. The mighty Creator became a part of the creation, limited by time and space and susceptible to aging, sickness, and death. But love propelled him, and so he came to rescue and save those who were lost and to give them the gift of eternity. He is *the Word*; he is Jesus, the Christ.

It is this truth that the apostle John brings to us in this book. John's Gospel is not a life of Christ; it is a powerful argument for the incarnation, a conclusive demonstration that Jesus was, and is, the very heaven-sent Son of God and the only source of eternal life.

John discloses Jesus' identity with his very first words, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God" (1:1, 2); and the rest of the book continues the theme. John, the eyewitness, chose eight of Jesus' miracles (or signs, as he calls them) to reveal his divine/human nature and his life-giving mission. These signs are (1) turning water to wine (2:1–11), (2) healing the official's son (4:46–54), (3) healing the lame man at the Pool of Bethesda (5:1–9), (4) feeding the 5,000 with just a few loaves and fish (6:1–14), (5) walking on the water (6:15–21), (6) restoring sight to the blind man (9:1–41), (7) raising Lazarus from the dead (11:1–44), and, after the resurrection, (8) giving the disciples an overwhelming catch of fish (21:1–14).

In every chapter Jesus' deity is revealed. And Jesus' true identity is underscored through the titles he is given—the Word, the only begotten Son, Lamb of God, Son of God, true Bread, Life, Resurrection, Vine. And the formula is "I am." When Jesus uses this phrase, he affirms his preexistence and eternal deity. Jesus says, *I am* the bread of life (6:35); *I am* the light of the world (8:12; 9:5); *I am* the door (10:7); *I am* the good shepherd (10:11, 14); *I am* the resurrection and the life (11:25); *I am* the way, the truth, and the life (14:6); and *I am* the true vine (15:1).

The greatest sign, of course, is the resurrection, and John provides a stirring eyewitness account of finding the empty tomb. Then he records various post-resurrection appearances by Jesus.

John, the devoted follower of Christ, has given us a personal and powerful look at Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God. As you read his story, commit yourself to believe in and follow him.

Tiberius  
Caesar  
becomes  
emperor  
14

Pontius  
Pilate  
appointed  
governor  
26

Jesus  
begins his  
ministry  
26/27

Jesus  
and  
Nicodemus  
27

Jesus  
chooses  
twelve  
disciples  
28

Jesus  
feeds  
5,000  
29

Jesus is  
crucified,  
rises again,  
and ascends  
30

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## THE BLUEPRINT

### A. BIRTH AND PREPARATION OF JESUS, THE SON OF GOD (1:1—2:12)

John makes it clear that Jesus is not just a man; he is the eternal Son of God. He is the light of the world because he offers this gift of eternal life to all people. How blind and foolish to call Jesus nothing more than an unusually good man or moral teacher. Yet we sometimes act as if this were true when we casually toss around his words and go about living our own way. If Jesus is the eternal Son of God, we should pay attention to his divine identity and life-giving message.

### B. MESSAGE AND MINISTRY OF JESUS, THE SON OF GOD (2:13—12:50)

1. Jesus encounters belief and unbelief from the people
2. Jesus encounters conflict with the religious leaders
3. Jesus encounters crucial events in Jerusalem

Jesus meets with individuals, preaches to great crowds, trains his disciples, and debates with the religious leaders. The message that he is the Son of God receives a mixed reaction. Some worship him, some are puzzled, some shrink back, and some move to silence him. We see the same varied reactions today. Times have changed, but people's hearts remain hard. May we see ourselves in these encounters Jesus had with people, and may our response be to worship and follow him.

### C. DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS, THE SON OF GOD (13:1—21:25)

1. Jesus teaches his disciples
2. Jesus completes his mission

Jesus carefully instructed the disciples how to continue to believe even after his death, yet they could not take it in. After he died and the first reports came back that Jesus was alive, the disciples could not believe it. Thomas is especially remembered as one who refused to believe even when he heard the eyewitness accounts from other disciples. May we not be like Thomas, demanding a physical face-to-face encounter, but may we accept the eyewitness testimony of the disciples that John has recorded in this Gospel.

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## MEGATHEMES

### THEME

### EXPLANATION

### IMPORTANCE

*Jesus Christ,  
Son of God*

John shows us that Jesus is unique as God's special Son, yet he is fully God. Because he is fully God, Jesus is able to reveal God to us clearly and accurately.

Because Jesus is God's Son, we can perfectly trust what he says. By trusting him, we can gain an open mind to understand God's message and fulfill his purpose in our lives.

*Eternal Life*

Because Jesus is God, he lives forever. Before the world began, he lived with God, and he will reign forever with him. In John we see Jesus revealed in power and magnificence even before his resurrection.

Jesus offers eternal life to us. We are invited to begin living in a personal, eternal relationship with him now. Although we must grow old and die, by trusting him we can have a new life that lasts forever.

*Belief*

John records eight specific signs, or miracles, that show the nature of Jesus' power and love. We see his power over everything created, and we see his love of all people. These signs encourage us to believe in him.

Believing is active, living, and continuous trust in Jesus as God. When we believe in his life, his words, his death, and his resurrection, we are cleansed from sin and receive power to follow him. But we must respond to him by believing.

*Holy Spirit*

Jesus taught his disciples that the Holy Spirit would come after he ascended from earth. The Holy Spirit would then indwell, guide, counsel, and comfort those who follow Jesus. Through the Holy Spirit, Christ's presence and power are multiplied in all who believe.

Through God's Holy Spirit, we are drawn to him in faith. We must know the Holy Spirit to understand all Jesus taught. We can experience Jesus' love and guidance as we allow the Holy Spirit to do his work in us.

*Resurrection*

On the third day after he died, Jesus rose from the dead. This was verified by his disciples and many eyewitnesses. This reality changed the disciples from frightened deserters to dynamic leaders in the new church. This fact is the foundation of the Christian faith.

We can be changed as the disciples were and have confidence that our bodies will one day be raised to live with Christ forever. The same power that raised Christ to life can give us the ability to follow Christ each day.

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**A. BIRTH AND PREPARATION OF JESUS, THE SON OF GOD (1:1—2:12)**

In this Gospel, John provides clear evidence that Jesus is the Son of God and that by believing in him we may have eternal life. John also provides unique material about Jesus' birth. He did not come into being when he was born, because he is eternal.

**God became a human being (2)**

**1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>The same was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. <sup>4</sup>In him was life; and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup>And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup>The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. <sup>8</sup>He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. <sup>9</sup>That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

<sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. <sup>11</sup>He came unto his own, and his own received him not. <sup>12</sup>But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: <sup>13</sup>which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup>And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

<sup>15</sup>John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.

1:2 the same: He. 1:5 comprehended it not: has not overcome it. 1:12 the sons: children. 1:15 cried: cried out. preferred before: greater than.

1:1

Gen 1:1

Phil 2:6

1 Jn 5:20

1:3

1 Cor 8:6

Col 1:16-17

Heb 1:2

1:4

John 3:15-16, 36;

6:35, 48; 8:12;

11:25; 14:6

1 Jn 5:12, 20

1:5

John 3:19; 9:5

1:7

John 5:33

1:9

1 Jn 2:8

1:12

Rom 8:15-16, 29

1 Jn 3:1, 23

1:14

Rom 1:3; 8:3

Gal 4:4

Phil 2:6-8

Col 2:9

1 Tim 3:16

Heb 2:14

1 Jn 1:1; 4:2-3

**1:1ff** What does John mean by *the Word*? *The Word* was a term used by theologians and philosophers, both Hebrew and Greek, in many different ways. In Hebrew Scripture, the Word was an agent of creation (Psalm 33:6), the source of God's message to his people through the prophets (Hosea 1:2), and God's Law, his standard for holiness (Psalm 119:11). In Greek philosophy *the Word* was the divine essence that held all things together, God's ideal pattern for creation. John's description shows clearly that he is speaking of Jesus (see especially 1:14)—a human being he knew and loved, but at the same time the Creator of the universe, the ultimate revelation of God, the living picture of God's holiness, the one by whom "all things consist" (Colossians 1:17). To Jewish readers, "the Word was God" was blasphemous. To Greek readers, "the Word was made flesh" was unthinkable. To John, this new understanding of the Word was Gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ.

**1:1** What Jesus taught and what he did are tied inseparably to who he is. John shows Jesus as fully human and fully God. Although Jesus took upon himself full humanity and lived as a man, he never ceased to be the eternal God who has always existed, the Creator and Sustainer of all things, and the source of eternal life. This is the truth about Jesus and the foundation of all truth. If we cannot or do not believe this basic truth, we will not have enough faith to trust our eternal destiny to him. That is why John wrote this Gospel—to build faith and confidence in Jesus Christ so that we may believe he truly was and is the Son of God (20:30, 31).

**1:1** John wrote to believers everywhere, both Jews and non-Jews (Gentiles). As one of Jesus' 12 disciples, John writes with credibility and the details of an eyewitness. His book is not a biography (like the book of Luke) but a thematic presentation of Jesus' life. Many in John's original audience had a Greek background. Greek culture encouraged worship of many mythological gods, whose supernatural characteristics were as important to Greeks as genealogies were to Jews. John shows that Jesus is not only different from but superior to these gods of mythology.

**1:3** When God created, he made something from nothing. Because we are created beings, we have no basis for pride. Remember that you exist only because God made you, and you have special gifts only because God gave them to you. With God you are something valuable and unique; apart from God you are nothing, because you are abandoning the purpose for which you were made.

**1:3–5** Do you ever feel your life is too complex for God to understand? Remember, God created the entire universe, and nothing is too difficult for him. He created you, he is alive today, and his love is bigger than any problem you may face.

**1:4** Why is the life that was in Christ "the light of men"? Because death brings eternal darkness, and only Christ's eternal life planted in us will keep us alive in his new Kingdom for eternity. Christ is eternally alive because he is God. He came to earth to offer mankind the hope and light of his eternal life. It can't be bought, only received as a gift. But Jesus gives it only to those who want it—those who want to live the way God's citizens will live in his future eternal Kingdom.

**1:4, 5** "The darkness comprehended it not" means the darkness of evil never has and never will overcome or extinguish God's light. Jesus Christ was the Creator of life, and his life brings light to mankind. In his light, we see ourselves as we really are (sinners in need of a Savior). When we follow Jesus, the Light, we can avoid walking blindly and falling into sin. He lights the path ahead of us so we can see how to live. He removes the darkness of sin from our lives. In what ways have you allowed the light of Christ to shine into your life? Let Christ guide your life, and you'll never need to stumble in darkness.

**1:6–8** In this book, the name *John* refers to John the Baptist. For more information on John the Baptist, see his Profile on the next page, p. 1541.

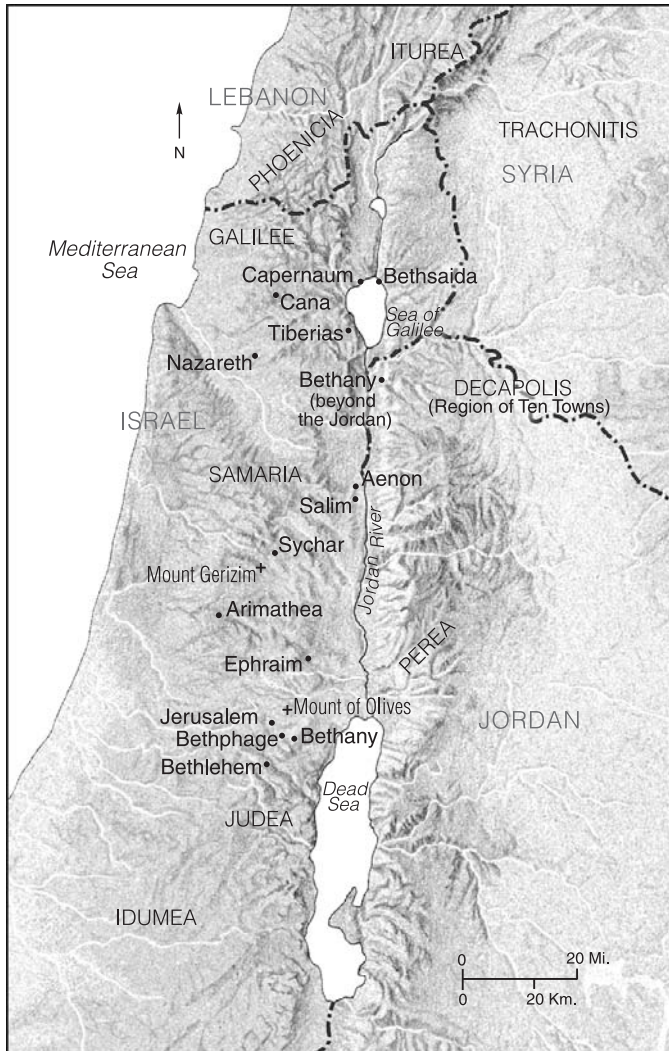
**1:8** We, like John the Baptist, are not the source of God's light; we merely reflect that light. Jesus Christ is the true Light; he helps us see our way to God and shows us how to walk along that way. But Christ has chosen to reflect his light from his followers to an unbelieving world, perhaps because unbelievers are not able to bear the full blazing glory of his light firsthand. The word *witness* indicates our role as reflectors of Christ's light. We are never to present ourselves as the light to others, but are always to point them to Christ, the Light.

**1:10, 11** Although Christ created the world, the people he created didn't recognize him (1:10). Even the people chosen by God to prepare the rest of the world for the Messiah rejected him (1:11), although the entire Old Testament pointed to his coming.

**1:12, 13** All who welcome Jesus Christ as Lord of their lives are reborn spiritually, receiving new life from God. Through faith in Christ, this new birth changes us from the inside out—rearranging



## KEY PLACES IN JOHN



The broken lines (---) indicate modern boundaries.

John's story begins as John the Baptist ministers near Bethany (Bethabara) beyond the Jordan (1:28ff). Jesus also begins his ministry, talking to some of the men who would later become his 12 disciples. Jesus' ministry in Galilee began with a visit to a wedding in Cana (2:1ff). Then he went to Capernaum, which became his new home (2:12). He journeyed to Jerusalem for the special feasts (2:13), and there met with Nicodemus, a religious leader (3:1ff). When he left Judea, he traveled through Samaria and ministered to the Samaritans (4:1ff). Jesus did miracles in Galilee (4:46ff) and in Judea and Jerusalem (5:1ff). We follow him as he fed 5,000 near Bethsaida beside the Sea of Galilee (Sea of Tiberias) (6:1ff), walked on the water to his frightened disciples (6:16ff), preached through Galilee (7:1), returned to Jerusalem (7:2ff), preached beyond the Jordan in Perea (10:40), raised Lazarus from the dead in Bethany (11:1ff), and finally entered Jerusalem for the last time to celebrate the Passover with his disciples and give them key teachings about what was to come and how they should act. His last hours before his crucifixion were spent in the city (13:1ff), in the Garden of Gethsemane (18:1ff), and finally in various buildings in Jerusalem during his trial (18:12ff). He would be crucified, but he would rise again as he had promised.

our attitudes, desires, and motives. Being born makes you physically alive and places you in your parents' family (1:13). Being reborn makes you spiritually alive and puts you in God's family (1:12). Have you asked Christ to make you a new person? This fresh start in life is available to all who believe in Christ.

**1:14** "And the Word was made flesh" means becoming human. By doing so, Christ became (1) *the perfect teacher*—in Jesus' life we see how God thinks and therefore how we should think (Philippians 2:5–11); (2) *the perfect example*—as a model of what we are to become, he shows us how to live and gives us the power to live that way (1 Peter 2:21); (3) *the perfect sacrifice*—Jesus came as a sacrifice for all sins, and his death satisfied God's requirements for the removal of sin (Colossians 1:15–23).

**1:14** "The only begotten of the Father" means Jesus is God's only and unique Son. The emphasis is on unique. Jesus is one of a kind and enjoys a relationship with God unlike all believers who are called "sons" and said to be "born of God."

**1:14** When Christ was conceived, God became a man. He was not part man and part God; he was completely human and completely divine (Colossians 2:9). Before Christ came, people could know God partially. After Christ came, people could know God fully because he became visible and tangible in Christ. Christ is the perfect expression of God in human form. The two most common errors people make about Jesus are to minimize his humanity or to minimize his divinity. Jesus is both God and man.



<sup>16</sup>And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. <sup>17</sup>For the law was given by Moses, *but* grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.

1:16  
Col 2:9-10

### John the Baptist declares his mission (19)

<sup>19</sup>And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? <sup>20</sup>And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.

1:17  
Exod 31:18; 34:28  
John 7:19

<sup>21</sup>And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias?

1:18  
Exod 33:20  
2 Cor 4:4, 6  
Col 1:15

And he saith, I am not.

Art thou that prophet?

1:19-28  
/Matt 3:1-12  
/Mark 1:2-8  
/Luke 3:1-16

And he answered, No.

<sup>22</sup>Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?

1:20  
Luke 3:15  
John 3:28

<sup>23</sup>He said, I *am* the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

1:21  
Deut 18:15  
Mal 4:5  
Matt 11:14

<sup>24</sup>And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. <sup>25</sup>And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?

1:23  
/Isa 40:3

<sup>26</sup>John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; <sup>27</sup>he it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. <sup>28</sup>These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

1:26  
Mal 3:1  
Matt 3:11  
Mark 1:8  
Luke 3:16

### John the Baptist proclaims Jesus as the Messiah (20)

<sup>29</sup>The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. <sup>30</sup>This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. <sup>31</sup>And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.

1:27  
Mark 1:7  
John 1:15  
Acts 13:25

1:16 *and grace for grace*: one blessing after another. 1:18 *in the bosom*: at the side. *declared him*: made him known. 1:19 *record*: testimony. 1:21 *Elias*: Elijah. 1:23 *Esaias*: Isaiah. 1:27 *shoe's latchet*: shoelace. *unloose*: untie. 1:28 *Bethabara beyond*: Bethany on the other side of the. 1:31 *made manifest*: revealed.

1:28  
John 3:26; 10:40

1:29  
Isa 53:7  
1 Cor 5:7  
1 Pet 1:19

1:30  
John 1:15, 27

1:17 Law and grace are both aspects of God's nature that he uses in dealing with us. Moses emphasized God's Law and justice, while Jesus Christ came to highlight God's mercy, love, and forgiveness. Moses could only be the giver of the Law, while Christ came to fulfill it. The nature and will of God were revealed in the Law; now the nature and will of God are revealed in Jesus Christ. Rather than coming through cold stone tablets, God's revelation ("truth") now comes through a person's life. As we get to know Christ better, our understanding of God will increase.

1:17 God communicated through various people in the Old Testament, usually prophets who were told to give specific messages. But no one ever *saw* God. In Christ, God revealed his nature and essence in a way that could be seen and touched. In Christ, God became a man who lived on earth.

1:18 "In the bosom of the Father" means at his Father's side, his constant companion, and implies close intimacy.

1:19 The priests and Levites were respected religious leaders in Jerusalem. Priests served in the Temple, and Levites assisted them. The leaders that came to see John were Pharisees (1:24), a group that both John the Baptist and Jesus often denounced. Many of them outwardly obeyed God's laws to look pious, while inwardly their hearts were filled with pride and greed. The Pharisees believed that their own oral traditions were just as important as God's inspired Word. For more information on the Pharisees, see the charts in Matthew 4, p. 1339 and Mark 2, p. 1411.

These leaders came to see John the Baptist for several reasons: (1) Their duty as guardians of faith included investigating any new teaching or movement (Deuteronomy 13:1-5; 18:20-22). (2) They wanted to find out if he had the credentials of a prophet. (3) John had quite a following, and it was growing. They were probably jealous and wanted to see why this man was so popular.

1:21-23 In the Pharisees' minds, there were four options regarding John the Baptist's identity: He was (1) the prophet foretold by Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15), (2) Elijah (Malachi 4:5), (3) the Messiah, or (4) a false prophet. John denied being the first three

personages. Instead he called himself, in the words of the Old Testament prophet Isaiah, "the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness" (Isaiah 40:3). The leaders kept pressing him to say who he was, because people were expecting the Messiah to come (Luke 3:15). But John emphasized only *why* he had come—to prepare the way for the Messiah. The Pharisees missed the point. They wanted to know who John was, but John wanted to prepare them to recognize who Jesus was.

1:25, 26 John was baptizing Jews. The Essenes (a strict, monastic sect of Judaism) practiced baptism for purification, but normally only non-Jews (Gentiles) were baptized when they converted to Judaism. When the Pharisees asked by what authority he was baptizing, they were asking who gave John the right to treat God's chosen people like Gentiles. John said, "I baptize with water"—he was merely helping the people perform a symbolic act of repentance. But soon one would come who would truly *forgive* sins, something only the Son of God—the Messiah—could do.

1:27 John the Baptist said he was not even fit to be Christ's slave, to perform the humble task of unfastening his shoes. But in Luke 7:28, Jesus said that John was the greatest of all prophets. If such a great person felt inadequate even to be Christ's slave, how much more should we lay aside our pride to serve Christ! When we truly understand who Christ is, our pride and self-importance melt away.

1:29 Every morning and evening, a lamb was sacrificed in the Temple for the sins of the people (Exodus 29:38-42). Isaiah 53:7 prophesied that the Messiah, God's servant, would be led to slaughter like a lamb. To pay the penalty for sin, a life had to be given—and God chose to provide the sacrifice himself. The sins of the world were removed when Jesus died as the perfect sacrifice. This is the way our sins are forgiven (1 Corinthians 5:7). The "sin of the world" means everyone's sin, the sin of each individual. Jesus paid the price of *your* sin by his death. You can receive forgiveness by confessing your sin to him and asking for his forgiveness.

1:32  
 Matt 3:16  
 Mark 1:10  
 Luke 3:22  
 1:33  
 Luke 3:16  
 Acts 1:5

<sup>32</sup>And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. <sup>33</sup>And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. <sup>34</sup>And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

1:32 *bare record*: gave testimony, *abode upon*: remained on.



# JOHN THE BAPTIST

There's no getting around it—John the Baptist was unique. He wore odd clothes and ate strange food and preached an unusual message to the Judeans who went out to the wastelands to see him.

But John did not aim at uniqueness for its own sake. Instead, he aimed at obedience. He knew he had a specific role to play in the world—announcing the coming of the Savior—and he put all his energies into this task. Luke tells us that John was in the wilderness when God's word of direction came to him. John was ready and waiting. The angel who had announced John's birth to Zacharias had made it clear this child was to be a Nazarite—one set apart for God's service. John remained faithful to that calling.

This wild-looking man had no power or position in the Jewish political system, but he spoke with almost irresistible authority. People were moved by his words because he spoke the truth, challenging them to turn from their sins and baptizing them as a symbol of their repentance. They responded by the hundreds. But even as people crowded to him, he pointed beyond himself, never forgetting that his main role was to announce the coming of the Savior.

The words of truth that moved many to repentance goaded others to resistance and resentment. John even challenged Herod to admit his sin. Herodias, the woman Herod had married illegally, decided to get rid of this desert preacher. Although she was able to have him killed, she was not able to stop his message. The One John had announced was already on the move. John had accomplished his mission.

God has given each of us a purpose for living, and we can trust him to guide us. John did not have the complete Bible as we know it today, but he focused his life on the truth he knew from the available Old Testament Scriptures. Likewise we can discover in God's Word the truths he wants us to know. And as these truths work in us, others will be drawn to him. God can use you in a way he can use no one else. Let him know your willingness to follow him today.

#### Strengths and accomplishments:

- The God-appointed messenger to announce the arrival of Jesus
- A preacher whose theme was repentance
- A fearless confronter
- Known for his remarkable lifestyle
- Uncompromising

#### Lessons from his life:

- God does not guarantee an easy or safe life to those who serve him
- Doing what God desires is the greatest possible life investment
- Standing for the truth is more important than life itself

#### Vital statistics:

- Where: Judea
- Occupation: Prophet
- Relatives: Father: Zacharias. Mother: Elisabeth. Distant cousin: Jesus.
- Contemporaries: Herod, Herodias

#### Key verse:

"Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he" (Matthew 11:11).

John's story is told in all four Gospels. His coming was predicted in Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 4:5; he is mentioned in Acts 1:5, 22; 10:37; 11:16; 13:24, 25; 18:25; 19:3, 4.

**1:30** Although John the Baptist was a well-known preacher and attracted large crowds, he was content for Jesus to take the higher place. This is true humility, the basis for greatness in preaching, teaching, or any other work we do for Christ. When you are content to do what God wants you to do and let Jesus Christ be honored for it, God will do great things through you.

**1:31-34** At Jesus' baptism, John the Baptist declared him the Messiah. At this time God gave John a sign to show him that Jesus was truly sent from God (1:33). John and Jesus were related, so John probably knew who he was. But it wasn't until Jesus' baptism that John understood Jesus to be the Messiah. Jesus' baptism is described in Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; and Luke 3:21, 22.

**1:33** John the Baptist's baptism by water was preparatory, because it was for repentance and symbolized the washing away of sins. Jesus, by contrast, would baptize with the Holy Spirit. He would send the Holy Spirit upon all believers, empowering them to live and teach the message of salvation. This began after Jesus had risen from the dead and ascended into heaven (see 20:22; Acts 2).

**1:34** John the Baptist's job was to point people to Jesus, the Messiah for whom they were looking. Today people are looking for someone to give them security in an insecure world. Our job is to point them to Christ and to show that he is the one they seek.



### The first disciples follow Jesus (21)

<sup>35</sup>Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;<sup>36</sup>and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!<sup>37</sup>And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

<sup>38</sup>Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, **What seek ye?**

They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?

<sup>39</sup>He saith unto them, **Come and see.** They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.

<sup>40</sup>One of the two which heard John *speak*, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. <sup>41</sup>He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

<sup>42</sup>And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, **Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas**, which is by interpretation, A stone.

<sup>43</sup>The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, **Follow me.** <sup>44</sup>Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

<sup>45</sup>Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

<sup>46</sup>And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?

Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

<sup>47</sup>Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, **Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!**

<sup>48</sup>Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me?

**1:35** stood, and: was standing with. **1:38** Master: Teacher. *dwellest thou*: are you staying. **1:39** abode: stayed. **1:41** Messiah: Messiah. **1:42** Jona: John. **1:43** would: decided to. **1:47** no guile: nothing false. **1:48** whence knowest thou: how do you know.

**1:40**  
Matt 4:18-22  
Mark 1:16  
Luke 5:2-11

**1:42**  
Matt 16:18  
1 Cor 15:5  
1 Pet 2:5

**1:43**  
John 6:5-6;  
12:20-22

**1:45**  
Isa 4:2; 7:14; 9:1-2,  
6-7; 11:1-10; 22:22-  
24; 32:1-4; 35:5-6;  
40:3-11; 42:1-9;  
49:1-10; 52:10, 13;  
53:1-12; 61:1-2  
Jer 23:5-6; 30:9  
Ezek 34:23-24;  
37:24-25  
Dan 2:34-35,  
44-45; 7:13; 9:25-26  
Hos 11:1  
Mic 5:2  
Zech 3:8-9; 6:12-13;  
9:9; 11:12-13;  
12:10; 13:1, 7  
Mal 3:1; 4:2, 5

**1:35ff** These new disciples used several names for Jesus: Lamb of God (1:36), Rabbi (1:38), Messiah (1:41), Son of God (1:49), King of Israel (1:49). As they got to know Jesus, their appreciation for him grew. The more time we spend getting to know Christ, the more we understand and appreciate who he is. We may be drawn to him for his teaching, but we will come to know him as the Son of God. Although these disciples made this verbal shift in a few days, they would not fully understand until three years later (Acts 2). What they so easily professed had to be worked out in experience. We may find that words of faith come easily, but deep appreciation for Christ comes with living by faith. **1:37** One of the two disciples was Andrew (1:40). The other was probably John, the writer of this book. Why did these disciples leave John the Baptist? Because that's what John wanted them to do—he pointed the way to Jesus, whom he had prepared them

to follow. These were Jesus' first disciples, along with Simon Peter (1:42) and Nathanael (1:45).

**1:38** When the two disciples began to follow Jesus, he asked them, "What seek ye?" Following Christ is not enough; we must follow him for the right reasons. To follow Christ for our own purposes is asking Christ to follow us—to align with us to build our cause, not his. We must examine our motives for following him. Are we seeking his glory or ours?

**1:40–42** Andrew accepted John the Baptist's testimony about Jesus and immediately went to tell his brother, Simon, about him. There was no question in Andrew's mind that Jesus was the Messiah. Not only did he tell his brother, but he was also eager to introduce others to Jesus (see 6:8, 9; 12:22). How many people in your life have heard you talk about your relationship with Jesus?

**1:42** Jesus saw not only who Simon was, but who he would become. That is why he gave him a new name—Cephas in Aramaic, Peter in Greek (the name means "rock"). Peter is not presented as rock-solid throughout the Gospels, but he became a solid rock in the days of the early church, as we learn in the book of Acts. By giving Simon a new name, Jesus introduced a change in character. For more on Simon Peter, see his Profile in Matthew 26, p. 1397.

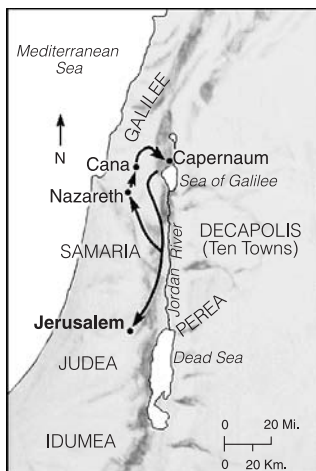
**1:46** Nazareth was despised by the Jews because a Roman army garrison was located there. Some have speculated that an aloof attitude or a poor reputation in morals and religion on the part of the people of Nazareth led to Nathanael's harsh comment. Nathanael's hometown was Cana, about four miles from Nazareth.

**1:46** When Nathanael heard that the Messiah was from Nazareth, he was surprised. Philip responded, "Come and see." Fortunately, Nathanael went to meet Jesus and became a disciple. If he had acted on his prejudice without investigating further, he would have missed the Messiah! Don't let people's stereotypes about Christ cause them to miss his power and love. Invite them to come and see who he really is.

**1:47–49** Jesus knew about Nathanael before the two ever met. Christ also knows what we are really like. An honest person will feel comfortable with the thought that Jesus knows him through and through. A dishonest person will feel uncomfortable. You

### JESUS' FIRST TRAVELS

After his baptism by John in the Jordan River and the temptation by Satan in the wilderness (see the map in Mark 1, p. 1407), Jesus returned to Galilee. He visited Nazareth, Cana, and Capernaum, and then returned to Jerusalem for the Passover.



Jesus answered and said unto him, **Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.**

<sup>49</sup>Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.

<sup>50</sup>Jesus answered and said unto him, **Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.** <sup>51</sup>And he saith unto him, **Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.**

*Jesus turns water into wine (22)*

**2** And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: <sup>2</sup>and both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. <sup>3</sup>And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.

1:51 verily: truly. 2:2 called: invited. 2:3 wanted: ran out of.

1:49  
2 Sam 7:14  
Ps 2:2  
John 1:34; 20:31  
1:51  
Gen 28:12

2:1  
John 1:35, 43



NICODEMUS

God specializes in finding and changing people we consider out of reach. It took awhile for Nicodemus to come out of the dark, but God was patient with this “undercover” believer.

Afraid of being discovered, Nicodemus made an appointment to see Jesus at night. Daylight conversations between Pharisees and Jesus tended to be antagonistic, but Nicodemus really wanted to learn. He probably got a lot more than he expected—a challenge to a new life! We know very little about Nicodemus, but we know that he left that evening’s encounter a changed man. He came away with a whole new understanding of both God and himself.

Nicodemus next appears as part of the Jewish Council. As the group discussed ways to eliminate Jesus, Nicodemus raised the question of justice. Although his objection was overruled, he had spoken up. He had begun to change.

Our last picture of Nicodemus shows him joining Joseph of Arimathea in asking for Jesus’ body to provide for its burial. Realizing what he was risking, Nicodemus was making a bold move. He was continuing to grow.

God looks for steady growth, not instant perfection. How well does your present level of spiritual growth match up with how long you have known Jesus?

**Strengths and accomplishments:**

- One of the few religious leaders who believed in Jesus
- A member of the powerful Council
- A Pharisee who was attracted by Jesus’ character and miracles
- Joined with Joseph of Arimathea in burying Jesus

**Weakness and mistake:**

- Limited by his fear of being publicly exposed as Jesus’ follower

**Lessons from his life:**

- Unless we are born again, we can never be part of the Kingdom of God
- God is able to change those we might consider unreachable
- God is patient, but persistent
- If we are available, God can use us

**Vital statistics:**

- Where: Jerusalem
- Occupation: Religious leader
- Contemporaries: Jesus, Annas, Caiaphas, Pilate, Joseph of Arimathea

**Key verse:**

“Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?” (John 3:4)

Nicodemus’s story is told in John 3:1–21; 7:50–52; and 19:39, 40.

can’t pretend to be something you’re not. God knows the real you and wants *you* to follow him.

**1:51** Jesus was referring to Jacob’s dream recorded in Genesis 28:12. As the unique God-man, Jesus would be the ladder between heaven and earth. This would not be a physical experience such as the transfiguration, but spiritual insight into Jesus’ true nature and purpose for coming.

**2:1, 2** Jesus was on a mission to save the world, the greatest mission in the history of mankind. Yet he took time to attend a wedding and take part in its festivities. We may be tempted to think we should not take time out from our “important” work for social occasions. But maybe these social occasions are part of our mission. Jesus valued these wedding festivities because they involved

people, and Jesus came to be with people. Our mission can often be accomplished in joyous times of celebration with others. Bring balance to your life by bringing Jesus into times of pleasure as well as times of work.

**2:1–3** Weddings in Jesus’ day were week-long festivals. Banquets were prepared for many guests, and the week was spent celebrating the new life of the married couple. Often the whole town was invited, and everybody came—it was considered an insult to refuse an invitation to a wedding. To accommodate many people, careful planning was needed. To run out of wine was more than embarrassing; it broke the strong unwritten laws of hospitality. Jesus was about to respond to a heartfelt need.

<sup>4</sup>Jesus saith unto her, **Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.**

**2:4**  
John 7:30; 8:20

<sup>5</sup>His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.

**2:6**  
Mark 7:3-4  
John 3:25

<sup>6</sup>And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. <sup>7</sup>Jesus saith unto them, **Fill the waterpots with water.** And they filled them up to the brim. <sup>8</sup>And he saith unto them, **Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast.** And they bare it.

**2:9**  
John 4:46

<sup>9</sup>When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, <sup>10</sup>and saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: *but* thou hast kept the good wine until now.

<sup>11</sup>This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

**2:11**  
John 2:23; 3:2;  
4:54; 6:14; 11:47;  
12:37

<sup>12</sup>After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days.

**2:12**  
Matt 12:46-50

## B. MESSAGE AND MINISTRY OF JESUS, THE SON OF GOD (2:13—12:50)

John stresses the deity of Christ. He gives us seven miracles that serve as signs that Jesus is the Messiah. In this section he records Jesus describing himself as the bread of life, the water of life, the light of the world, the door, and the good shepherd. John provides teachings of Jesus found nowhere else. This is the most theological of the four Gospels.

### 1. Jesus encounters belief and unbelief from the people

#### Jesus clears the Temple (23)

<sup>13</sup>And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, <sup>14</sup>and found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: <sup>15</sup>and

**2:13-22**  
/Matt 21:12-17  
/Mark 11:15-19  
/Luke 19:45-48

**2:6** after the manner of: the kind used for. *purifying*: ceremonial washing. *two or three firkins*: twenty or thirty gallons.

**2:8** bear unto: take it to. *governor*: master. **2:9** ruler: master. *whence it was*: where it came from. **2:10** worse:

**2:13**  
Deut 16:1-6  
John 6:4; 11:55

inferior. **2:11** manifested forth: revealed. **2:12** continued: stayed.

**2:4** Mary was probably not asking Jesus to do a miracle; she simply hoped her son would help solve this major problem and find some wine. Tradition says that Joseph, Mary's husband, was dead, so she probably was used to asking for her son's help in difficult situations. Jesus' answer to Mary is difficult to understand, but maybe that is the point. Although Mary did not understand what Jesus was going to do, she trusted him to do the right thing. Those who believe in Jesus but run into situations they cannot understand must continue to trust that he will work in the best way.

**2:5** Mary submitted to Jesus' way of doing things. She recognized that Jesus was more than her human son—he was the Son of God. When we bring our problems to Christ, we may think we know how he should take care of them. But he may have a completely different plan. Like Mary, we should submit and allow him to deal with the problem as he sees best.

**2:6** The six stone waterpots were normally used for ceremonial washing. When full, the pots would hold 20 to 30 gallons. According to the Jews' ceremonial law, people became symbolically unclean by touching objects of everyday life. Before eating, they poured water over their hands to cleanse themselves of any bad influences associated with what they had touched.

**2:10** People look everywhere but to God for excitement and meaning. They somehow expect God to be dull and lifeless. Just as the wine Jesus made was the best, so life in him is better than life on our own. Why wait until everything else runs out before trying God? Why save the best until last?

**2:11** When the disciples saw Jesus' miracle, they believed. The miracle showed his power over nature and revealed the way he would go about his ministry—helping others, speaking with authority, and being in personal touch with people.

Miracles are not merely superhuman happenings, but happenings that demonstrate God's power. Almost every miracle Jesus did was a renewal of fallen creation—restoring sight, making the lame walk, even restoring life to the dead. Believe in him not because he is a superman but because he is God continuing his creation, even in those of us who are poor, weak, crippled, orphaned, blind, lame, or with some other desperate need.

**2:12** Capernaum became Jesus' home base during his ministry in Galilee. Located on a major trade route, it was an important city in the region, with a Roman garrison and a customs station. At Capernaum, Matthew was called to be a disciple (Matthew 9:9). The city was also the home of several other disciples (Matthew 4:13–19) and a high-ranking government official (4:46). It had at least one major synagogue. Although Jesus made this city his base of operations in Galilee, he condemned it for the people's unbelief (Matthew 11:23; Luke 10:15).

**2:13** The Passover celebration took place yearly at the Temple in Jerusalem. Every Jewish male was expected to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem during this time (Deuteronomy 16:16). This was a week-long festival—the Passover was one day, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread lasted the rest of the week. The entire week commemorated the freeing of the Jews from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 12:1–13).

**2:13** Jerusalem was both the religious and the political seat of Palestine, and the place where the Messiah was expected to arrive. The Temple was located there, and many Jewish families from all over the world traveled to Jerusalem during the key feasts. The Temple was built on an imposing site, a hill overlooking the city. Solomon had built the first Temple on this same site almost 1,000 years earlier (959 B.C.), but his Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians (2 Kings 25). The Temple was rebuilt in 515 B.C., and Herod the Great enlarged and remodeled it.

**2:14–16** God's Temple was being misused by people who turned it into a marketplace. They forgot, or didn't care, that God's house is a place of worship, not a place for making a profit. Our attitude toward the church is wrong if we see it as a place for personal contacts or business advantage. Make sure you attend church to worship God.

**2:14ff** John records this first cleansing of the Temple. A second cleansing occurred at the end of Jesus' ministry, about three years later, and is recorded in Matthew 21:12–17; Mark 11:12–19; and Luke 19:45–48.

**2:14** The Temple area was always crowded during Passover with thousands of out-of-town visitors. The religious leaders

2:16  
Luke 2:49

when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; <sup>16</sup>and said unto them that sold doves, **Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.**

2:17  
<sup>1</sup>Ps 69:9

<sup>17</sup>And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

2:19  
Matt 26:61; 27:40  
Mark 14:58  
Acts 6:14

<sup>18</sup>Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

<sup>19</sup>Jesus answered and said unto them, **Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.**

2:21  
John 10:38; 14:2, 10; 17:21  
1 Cor 3:16; 6:19

<sup>20</sup>Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? <sup>21</sup>But he spake of the temple of his body. <sup>22</sup>When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

2:22  
Luke 24:6-8  
John 12:16; 14:26

<sup>23</sup>Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast *day*, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. <sup>24</sup>But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all *men*, <sup>25</sup>and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

2:23  
John 7:31; 11:47-48

### *Nicodemus visits Jesus at night (24)*

3:1-2  
John 7:50; 19:39

**3** There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: <sup>2</sup>the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

3:2  
Matt 22:16  
Acts 2:22; 10:38

**2:15** scourge: whip. **2:16** hence: away. *house of merchandise*: market. **2:17** eaten me up: consumed me. **2:23** in the feast day: during the feast. **2:24** commit: trust.

crowded it even further by allowing money changers and merchants to set up booths in the Court of the Gentiles. They rationalized this practice as a convenience for the worshipers and as a way to make money for Temple upkeep. But the religious leaders did not seem to care that the Court of the Gentiles was so full of merchants that foreigners found it difficult to worship. And worship was the main purpose for visiting the Temple. No wonder Jesus was angry!

**2:14** The Temple tax had to be paid in local currency, so foreigners had to have their money changed. The money changers, unfortunately, often charged exorbitant exchange rates. The people were also required to make sacrifices for sins. Because of the long journey, many could not bring their own animals. Some who brought animals had them rejected for imperfections. Thus, animal merchants conducted a flourishing business in the Temple courtyard. The price for sacrificial animals was much higher in the Temple area than elsewhere. Jesus was angry at the dishonest, greedy practices of the money changers and merchants, and he particularly disliked their presence on the Temple grounds. They made a mockery of God's house of worship.

**2:15, 16** Jesus was obviously angry at the merchants who exploited those who had come to God's house to worship. There is a difference between uncontrolled rage and righteous indignation—yet both are called anger. We must be very careful how we use the powerful emotion of anger. It is right to be angry about injustice and sin; it is wrong to be angry over trivial personal offenses.

**2:15, 16** Jesus made a whip and chased out the money changers. Does his example permit us to use violence against worshipers? Certain authority is granted to some, but not to all. For example, the authority to use weapons and restrain people is granted to police officers, but not to the general public. The authority to imprison people is granted to judges, but not to individual citizens. Jesus had God's authority, something we cannot have. While we want to live like Christ, we should never try to claim his authority where it has not been given to us.

**2:17** Jesus took the evil acts in the Temple as an insult against God, and thus he did not deal with them halfheartedly. He was "eaten up" with righteous anger against such flagrant disrespect for God.

**2:19, 20** The Jews understood Jesus to mean the Temple out of which he had just driven the merchants and money changers.

This was the Temple Zerubbabel had built over 500 years earlier, but Herod the Great had begun remodeling it, making it much larger and far more beautiful. It had been 46 years since this remodeling had started (20 B.C.), and it still wasn't completely finished. They understood Jesus' words to mean that this imposing building could be torn down and rebuilt in three days, and they were startled.

**2:21, 22** Jesus was not talking about the literal Temple, but about his body. His listeners didn't realize it, but Jesus was greater than the Temple (Matthew 12:6). His words would take on meaning for his disciples after his resurrection. That Christ so perfectly fulfilled this prediction became the strongest proof for his claims to be God.

**2:23–25** Jesus, the Son of God, knows all about human nature. He was well aware of the truth of Jeremiah 17:9, which states, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Jesus was discerning and he knew that the faith of some would-be followers was superficial. Some of the same people claiming to believe in Jesus at this time would later yell "Crucify him!" It's easy to believe when it is exciting and everyone else believes the same way. But keep your faith firm even when it isn't popular to follow Christ.

**3:1** Nicodemus was a ruler and a member of the Pharisees, a group of religious leaders whom Jesus and John the Baptist often criticized for being hypocrites (see the note on Matthew 3:7 for more on the Pharisees). Most Pharisees were intensely jealous of Jesus because he undermined their authority and challenged their views. But Nicodemus was searching, and he believed Jesus had some answers. A learned teacher himself, he came to Jesus to be taught. No matter how intelligent and well educated you are, you must come to Jesus with an open mind and heart so he can teach you the truth about God.

**3:1ff** Nicodemus came to Jesus personally, although he could have sent one of his assistants. He wanted to examine Jesus for himself to separate fact from rumor. Perhaps he was afraid of what his peers, the Pharisees, would say about his visit, so he came after dark. Later, when he understood that Jesus was truly the Messiah, he spoke up boldly in his defense (7:50, 51). Like Nicodemus, we must examine Jesus for ourselves—others cannot do it for us. Then, if we believe he is who he says, we will want to speak up for him.

<sup>3</sup>Jesus answered and said unto him, **Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.** **3:3**  
John 1:13

<sup>4</sup>Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

<sup>5</sup>Jesus answered, **Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.** <sup>6</sup>That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup>Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. <sup>8</sup>The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. **3:5**  
Ezek 36:26-27  
Titus 3:5  
2 Pet 1:11

<sup>9</sup>Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

<sup>10</sup>Jesus answered and said unto him, **Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?** <sup>11</sup>Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. <sup>12</sup>If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? <sup>13</sup>And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man which is in heaven. <sup>14</sup>And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: <sup>15</sup>that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. **3:6**  
John 1:13  
Rom 8:15-16  
1 Cor 15:50  
Gal 4:6

<sup>16</sup>For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. <sup>17</sup>For God sent not his Son into the

**3:3** verily: truly. **3:7** marvel not: do not be surprised. **3:8** listeth: wishes. whence: where. whither: where. **3:10** master: teacher. **3:16** whosoever believeth: whoever believes. **3:8**  
Eccl 11:5  
**3:13**  
John 6:38, 42  
Eph 4:8-10  
**3:14**  
Num 21:8-9  
John 8:28; 12:34  
**3:15**  
John 20:31  
1 Jn 5:11-12  
**3:16**  
Rom 5:8; 8:32  
1 Jn 4:9-10; 5:13  
**3:17**  
John 12:47

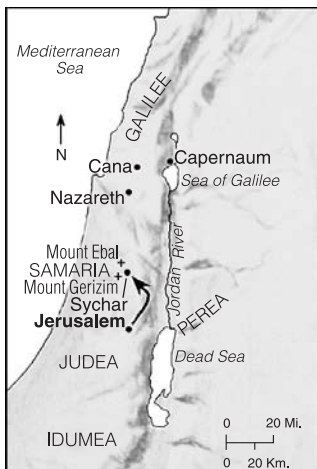
**3:3** What did Nicodemus know about the Kingdom? From the Bible he knew it would be ruled by God, it would be restored on earth, and it would incorporate God's people. Jesus revealed to this devout Pharisee that the Kingdom would come to the whole world (3:16), not just the Jews, and that Nicodemus would not be a part of it unless he was personally born again (3:5). This was a revolutionary concept: The Kingdom is personal, not national or ethnic, and its entrance requirements are repentance and spiritual rebirth. Jesus later taught that God's Kingdom had *already begun* in the hearts of believers. It will be fully realized when Jesus returns to judge the world and abolish evil forever (Revelation 21—22).

**3:5, 6** "Of water and of the Spirit" could be referring (1) to the contrast between physical birth (water) and spiritual birth (Spirit), or (2) to being regenerated by the Spirit and demonstrating that rebirth by Christian baptism. The water may also represent the cleansing action of God's Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5). Nicodemus would have been familiar with God's promise in Ezekiel 36:25, 26. Jesus was explaining the importance of a spiritual rebirth, saying that people don't enter the Kingdom by living a better life, but by being spiritually reborn.

**3:6** Who is the Holy Spirit? God is three persons in one—the

### THE VISIT IN SAMARIA

Jesus went to Jerusalem for the Passover, cleansed the Temple, and talked with Nicodemus, a religious leader, about eternal life. He then left Jerusalem and traveled in Judea. On his way to Galilee, he visited Sychar and other villages in Samaria. Unlike most Jews of the day, he did not try to avoid the region of Samaria.



Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God became a man in Jesus so that Jesus could die for our sins. Jesus rose from the dead to offer salvation to all people through spiritual renewal and rebirth. When Jesus ascended into heaven, his physical presence left the earth, but he promised to send the Holy Spirit so his spiritual presence would still be among mankind (see Luke 24:49). The Holy Spirit first became available to all believers at Pentecost (Acts 2). Whereas in Old Testament days the Holy Spirit empowered specific individuals for specific purposes, now all believers have the power of the Holy Spirit available to them. For more on the Holy Spirit, read 14:16–28; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 12:13; and 2 Corinthians 1:22.

**3:8** Jesus explained that we cannot control the work of the Holy Spirit. He works in ways we cannot predict or understand. Just as you did not control your physical birth, so you cannot control your spiritual birth. It is a gift from God through the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:16; 1 Corinthians 2:10–12; 1 Thessalonians 1:5, 6).

**3:8** Are there people you disregard, thinking they could never be brought to God—such as a world leader for whom you have never prayed or a successful person to whom you have never witnessed? Don't assume that anyone is beyond the reach of the Gospel. God, through his Holy Spirit, can reach anyone, and you should pray diligently for whomever he brings to your mind. Be a witness and example to everyone with whom you have contact. God may touch those you think most unlikely—and he may use you to do it.

**3:10, 11** This Jewish teacher of the Bible knew the Old Testament thoroughly, but he didn't understand what it said about the Messiah. Knowledge is not salvation. You should know the Bible, but even more important, you should understand the God whom the Bible reveals and the salvation that God offers.

**3:14, 15** When the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness, God sent a plague of serpents to punish the people for their rebellious attitudes. Those doomed to die from snakebite could be healed by obeying God's command to look up at the elevated bronze serpent and by believing that God would heal them if they did (see Numbers 21:8, 9). Similarly, our salvation happens when we look up to Jesus, believing he will save us. God has provided this way for us to be healed of sin's deadly bite.

**3:16** The entire Gospel comes into focus in this verse. God's love is not static or self-centered; it reaches out and draws others in. Here God sets the pattern of true love, the basis for all love relationships—when you love someone dearly, you are willing to give freely to the point of self-sacrifice. God paid dearly with the



**3:18**  
John 5:24  
**3:19**  
John 1:5, 9; 8:12;  
9:5; 12:46  
**3:20**  
Eph 5:11-13  
**3:21**  
1 Jn 1:6

world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. <sup>18</sup>He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. <sup>19</sup>And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. <sup>20</sup>For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. <sup>21</sup>But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

### *John the Baptist tells more about Jesus (25)*

**3:22**  
John 3:26; 4:1-2  
**3:24**  
Matt 4:12  
**3:26**  
John 1:7, 34  
**3:27**  
John 19:11  
1 Cor 4:7  
Heb 5:4

<sup>22</sup>After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized. <sup>23</sup>And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. <sup>24</sup>For John was not yet cast into prison. <sup>25</sup>Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. <sup>26</sup>And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him.

**3:28**  
Mal 3:1  
John 1:20, 23

<sup>27</sup>John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. <sup>28</sup>Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. <sup>29</sup>He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. <sup>30</sup>He must increase, but I must decrease.

**3:29**  
Matt 9:15  
2 Cor 11:2  
Rev 21:9

<sup>31</sup>He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. <sup>32</sup>And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. <sup>33</sup>He that hath received his testimony hath

**3:31**  
1 Jn 4:5

**3:32**  
John 3:11; 8:26

**3:33**  
1 Jn 5:10

**3:20** *reproved*: exposed. **3:21** *doeth truth*: does what is true. *made manifest*: clearly seen. *wrought in*: done through. **3:22** *tarried*: remained. **3:25** *purifying*: ceremonial washing.

life of his Son, the highest price he could pay. Jesus accepted our punishment, paid the price for our sins, and then offered us the new life he had bought for us. When we share the Gospel with others, our love must be like Jesus'—willingly giving up our own comfort and security so that others might join us in receiving God's love.

**3:16** Some people are repulsed by the idea of eternal life because their lives are miserable. But eternal life is not an extension of man's miserable, mortal life; eternal life is God's life embodied in Christ, given to all believers now as a guarantee that they will live forever. In eternal life there is no death, sickness, enemy, evil, or sin. When we don't know Christ, we make choices as though this life were all we had. In reality, this life is just the introduction to eternity. Receive this new life by faith and begin to evaluate all that happens from an eternal perspective.

**3:16** To believe is more than intellectual agreement that Jesus is God. It means to put our trust and confidence in him that he alone can save us. It is to put Christ in charge of our present plans and eternal destiny. Believing is both trusting his words as reliable and relying on him for the power to change. If you have never trusted Christ, let this promise of everlasting life be yours.

**3:18** People often try to protect themselves from their fears by putting their trust in something they do or have: their good works, their skill or intelligence, their money or possessions. But only God can save us from the one thing we really need to fear—eternal condemnation. We believe in God by recognizing the insufficiency of our own efforts to find salvation and by asking him to do his work in us. When Jesus talks about unbelievers, he means those who reject or ignore him completely, not those who have momentary doubts.

**3:19–21** Many people don't want their lives exposed to God's light because they are afraid of what it will reveal. They don't want to be changed. Don't be surprised when these same people are threatened by your desire to obey God and do what is right, because they are afraid that the light in you may expose some of the darkness in their lives. Rather than giving in to discouragement, keep praying that they will come to see how much better it is to live in light than in darkness.

**3:25ff** Some people look for points of disagreement so they can sow seeds of discord, discontent, and doubt. John the Baptist ended this theological argument by focusing on his devotion to Christ. It is divisive to try to force others to believe our way. Instead, let's witness about what Christ has done for us. How can anyone argue with us about that?

**3:26** John the Baptist's disciples were disturbed because people were following Jesus instead of John. It is easy to grow jealous of the popularity of another person's ministry. But we must remember that our true mission is to influence people to follow Christ, not us.

**3:27** Why did John the Baptist continue to baptize after Jesus came onto the scene? Why didn't he become a disciple too? John explained that God gave him his work, and he had to continue it until God called him to do something else. John's main purpose was to point people to Christ. Even with Jesus beginning his own ministry, John could still turn people to him.

**3:27** John believed God had appointed him. If God appoints us to a task, it becomes a high and holy privilege. We should accept it with great enthusiasm.

**3:30** John's willingness to decrease in importance shows unusual humility. Pastors and other Christian leaders can be tempted to focus more on the success of their ministries than on Christ. Beware of those who put more emphasis on their own achievements than on God's Kingdom.

**3:31–35** Jesus' testimony was trustworthy because he came from heaven and spoke of what he saw there. His words were the words of God. Your whole spiritual life depends on your answer to one question, "Who is Jesus Christ?" If you accept Jesus as only a prophet or teacher, you have to reject his teaching, for he claimed to be God's Son, even God himself. The heartbeat of John's Gospel is the dynamic truth that Jesus Christ is God's Son, the Messiah, the Savior, who was from the beginning and will continue to live forever. This same Jesus has invited us to accept him and live with him eternally. When we understand who Jesus is, we are compelled to believe what he said.



set to his seal that God is true. <sup>34</sup>For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure *unto him*. <sup>35</sup>The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. <sup>36</sup>He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

*Jesus talks to a woman at the well (27)*

**4** When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, <sup>2</sup>(though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) <sup>3</sup>he left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.

<sup>4</sup>And he must needs go through Samaria. <sup>5</sup>Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup>Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with *his* journey, sat thus on the well: *and* it was about the sixth hour. <sup>7</sup>There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, **Give me to drink**. <sup>8</sup>(For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

<sup>9</sup>Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

<sup>10</sup>Jesus answered and said unto her, **If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.**

<sup>11</sup>The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? <sup>12</sup>Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

<sup>13</sup>Jesus answered and said unto her, **Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: <sup>14</sup>but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.**

<sup>15</sup>The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

**3:33** set to his seal: certified. **3:36** abideth: remains. **4:4** must needs: needed to. **4:5** parcel: plot. **4:6** thus on: down by. **4:8** meat: food. **4:12** thereof: from it. *children*: sons.

**3:34**  
Luke 4:18

**3:35**  
Matt 28:18  
John 5:20; 10:17;  
15:9; 17:23

**3:36**  
John 3:16  
1 Jn 5:12-13

**4:1**  
John 3:22, 26

**4:4**  
Matt 10:5  
Luke 9:52

**4:5-6**  
Gen 33:19; 48:22  
Josh 24:32

**4:7**  
Gen 24:17  
1 Kgs 17:10

**4:9**  
Ezra 4:1-3; 9-10  
Matt 10:5  
Luke 9:52-53  
John 8:48  
Acts 10:48

**4:10**  
Isa 12:3; 44:3  
Jer 2:13; 17:13  
John 7:37-39  
1 Cor 12:13  
Rev 7:17; 21:6;  
22:17

**4:14**  
John 6:35; 7:38

**4:15**  
John 6:34

**3:34** "Giveth not the Spirit by measure" means God's Spirit was upon Jesus without measure or limit. Thus Jesus was the highest revelation of God to man (Hebrews 1:2, 3).

**3:36** Jesus says that those who believe in him *have* (not *will have*) everlasting life. To receive eternal life is to join in God's life, which by nature is eternal. Thus, eternal life begins at the moment of spiritual rebirth.

**3:36** John, the author of the Gospel, has been demonstrating that Jesus is the true Son of God. Jesus sets before us the greatest choice of life. We are responsible to decide today whom we will obey (Joshua 24:15), and God wants us to choose him and life (Deuteronomy 30:15-20). The wrath of God is God's final judgment and rejection of the sinner. To put off the choice is to choose not to follow Christ. Indecision is a fatal decision.

**4:1-3** Already opposition was rising against Jesus, especially from the Pharisees. They resented Jesus' popularity as well as his message, which challenged much of their teachings. Because Jesus was just beginning his ministry, it wasn't yet time to confront these leaders openly; so he left Jerusalem and traveled north toward Galilee.

**4:4** To go from the territory of Judea to Galilee meant passing through a central territory called Samaria. Most Jews did everything they could to avoid traveling through Samaria. The reason goes way back into their history.

When the Northern Kingdom with its capital at Samaria fell to the Assyrians, many Jews were deported to Assyria, and foreigners were brought in to settle the land and help keep the peace (2 Kings 17:24). The intermarriage between those foreigners and the remaining Jews resulted in a mixed race, impure in the opinion of Jews who lived in the Southern Kingdom. Thus the pure Jews hated this mixed race called Samaritans because they felt they had betrayed their people and nation. They had set up an alternate center for worship on Mount Gerazim (4:20) to parallel the Temple at Jerusalem; but it had been destroyed 150 years earlier. While there was long-standing prejudice between Jews and Samaritans,

Jesus did not live by such cultural restrictions. The route through Samaria was shorter, and that was the route he took.

**4:5-7** Jacob's well was on the property originally owned by Jacob. It was not a spring-fed well, but a well into which water seeped from rain and dew, collecting at the bottom. Wells were almost always located outside the city along the main road. Twice each day, morning and evening, women came to draw water. This woman came at noon, however, probably to avoid meeting people because of her reputation. Jesus gave this woman an extraordinary message about fresh and pure water that would quench her spiritual thirst forever.

**4:7-9** This woman (1) was a Samaritan, a member of the hated mixed race, (2) was known to be living in sin, and (3) was in a public place. No respectable Jewish man would talk to a woman under such circumstances. But Jesus did. The Gospel is for every person, no matter what his or her race, social position, or past sins. We must be prepared to share this Gospel at any time in any place. Jesus crossed all barriers to share the Gospel, and we who follow him must do no less.

**4:10** What did Jesus mean by "living water"? In the Old Testament, many verses speak of thirsting after God as one thirsts for water (Psalm 42:1; Isaiah 55:1; Jeremiah 2:13; Zechariah 13:1). God is called the fountain of life (Psalm 36:9) and the fountain of living waters (Jeremiah 17:13). In saying he would bring living water that could forever quench one's thirst for God, Jesus was claiming to be the Messiah. Only the Messiah could give this gift that satisfies the soul's desire.

**4:13-15** Many spiritual functions parallel physical functions. As our bodies hunger and thirst, so do our souls. But our souls need *spiritual* food and water. The woman confused the two kinds of water, perhaps because no one had ever talked with her about her spiritual hunger and thirst before. We would not think of depriving our bodies of food and water when they hunger or thirst. Why then should we deprive our souls? The living Word, Jesus Christ, and the written Word, the Bible, can satisfy our hungry and thirsty souls.

**4:19**  
Matt 21:46  
John 7:40; 9:17

**4:20**  
Deut 11:29; 12:5-14  
Josh 8:33

**4:21**  
Mal 1:11  
1 Tim 2:8

**4:22**  
2 Kgs 17:28-41  
Isa 2:3  
Rom 3:1-2; 9:4-5

**4:23-24**  
2 Cor 3:17-18  
Phil 3:3

**4:25**  
Deut 18:15

**4:26**  
Mark 14:61-62  
John 9:37

<sup>16</sup>Jesus saith unto her, **Go, call thy husband, and come hither.**

<sup>17</sup>The woman answered and said, I have no husband.

Jesus said unto her, **Thou hast well said, I have no husband: <sup>18</sup>for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.**

<sup>19</sup>The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. <sup>20</sup>Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

<sup>21</sup>Jesus saith unto her, **Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. <sup>22</sup>Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. <sup>23</sup>But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. <sup>24</sup>God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.**

<sup>25</sup>The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

<sup>26</sup>Jesus saith unto her, **I that speak unto thee am *he*.**

*Jesus tells about the spiritual harvest (28)*

<sup>27</sup>And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her? <sup>28</sup>The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, <sup>29</sup>Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? <sup>30</sup>Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

<sup>31</sup>In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat.

<sup>32</sup>But he said unto them, **I have meat to eat that ye know not of.**

<sup>33</sup>Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him *ought* to eat?

<sup>34</sup>Jesus saith unto them, **My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. <sup>35</sup>Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto**

**4:16** *hither*: here. **4:25** *Messias*: Messiah. **4:27** *upon this*: at this point. *marvelled*: were surprised. *seekest thou*: do you want. **4:31** *prayed*: urged. *Master*: Rabbi. **4:32** *meat*: food. **4:33** *ought*: anything.

**4:29**  
Matt 9:37  
John 7:26

**4:34**  
John 5:30, 36;  
6:38; 17:4

**4:35**  
Matt 9:37  
Luke 10:2

**4:15** The woman mistakenly believed that if she received the water Jesus offered, she would not have to return to the well each day. She was interested in Jesus' message because she thought it could make her life easier. But if that were always the case, people would accept Christ's message for the wrong reasons. Christ did not come to take away challenges, but to change us on the inside and to empower us to deal with problems from God's perspective.

**4:16-20** When this woman discovered that Jesus knew all about her private life, she quickly changed the subject. Often people become uncomfortable when the conversation is too close to home, and they try to change the subject. As we witness we should gently guide the conversation back to Christ. His presence reveals sin and makes people squirm, but only he can forgive the sins and give new life.

**4:20-24** The woman brought up a popular theological issue—the correct place to worship. But her question was a smoke screen to keep Jesus away from her deepest need. Jesus directed the conversation to a much more important point: The *location* of worship is not nearly so important as the *attitude* of the worshippers.

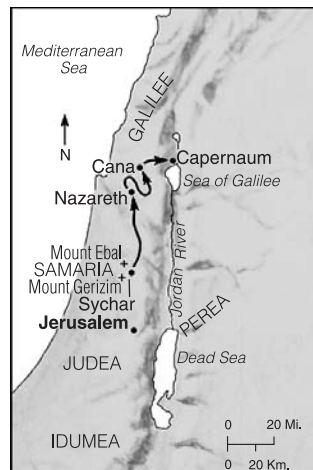
**4:22** When Jesus said, "salvation is of the Jews," he meant that only through the Jewish Messiah would the world find salvation. God promised that through the Jewish race the whole earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:3). The Old Testament prophets called the Jews to be a light to the other nations of the world, bringing them to a knowledge of God; and they predicted the Messiah's coming. The woman at the well knew of these passages and was expecting the Messiah, but she didn't realize she was talking to him!

**4:24** "God is a Spirit" means he is not a physical being limited to one place. He is present everywhere, and he can be worshiped anywhere, at any time. It is not where we worship that counts, but how we worship. Is your worship genuine and true? Do you have the Holy Spirit's help? How does the Holy Spirit help us worship? The Holy Spirit prays for us (Romans 8:26), teaches us the words of Christ (14:26), and tells us we are loved (Romans 5:5).

**4:34** The "meat" about which Jesus was speaking was his spiritual

nourishment. It includes more than Bible study, prayer, and attending church. Spiritual nourishment also comes from doing God's will and helping to bring his work of salvation to completion. We are nourished not only by what we take in, but also by what we give out for God. In 17:4, Jesus refers to completing his work on earth.

**4:35** Sometimes Christians excuse themselves from witnessing by saying their family or friends aren't ready to believe. Jesus, however, makes it clear that around us a continual harvest waits to be reaped. Don't let Jesus find you making excuses. Look around. You will find people ready to hear God's Word.



### JESUS RETURNS TO GALILEE

Jesus stayed in Sychar for two days, then went on to Galilee. He visited Nazareth and various towns in Galilee before arriving in Cana. From there he spoke the word of healing and a government official's son in Capernaum was healed. The Gospel of Matthew tells us Jesus then settled in Capernaum (Matthew 4:12, 13).

you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. <sup>36</sup>And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. <sup>37</sup>And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. <sup>38</sup>I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

4:37  
Job 31:8  
Mic 6:15

*Many Samaritans believe in Jesus (29)*

<sup>39</sup>And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. <sup>40</sup>So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. <sup>41</sup>And many more believed because of his own word; <sup>42</sup>and said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard *him* ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

4:42  
Luke 2:11  
1 Jn 4:14

*Jesus preaches in Galilee (30/Matthew 4:12–17; Mark 1:14, 15; Luke 4:14, 15)*

<sup>43</sup>Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee. <sup>44</sup>For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country. <sup>45</sup>Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galilaeans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast.

4:43-54  
//Matt 8:5-13  
//Luke 7:1-10

4:44  
Matt 13:57  
Luke 4:24

4:45  
John 2:23

*Jesus heals a government official's son (31)*

<sup>46</sup>So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum. <sup>47</sup>When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judaea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.

4:46  
John 2:1-11

<sup>48</sup>Then said Jesus unto him, **Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.**

4:48  
1 Cor 1:22

<sup>49</sup>The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die.

<sup>50</sup>Jesus saith unto him, **Go thy way; thy son liveth.** And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.

4:50  
Matt 8:13  
Mark 7:29

<sup>51</sup>And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told *him*, saying, Thy son liveth. <sup>52</sup>Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. <sup>53</sup>So the father knew that *it was* at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, **Thy son liveth:** and himself believed, and his

4:53  
Acts 11:14;  
16:14-15

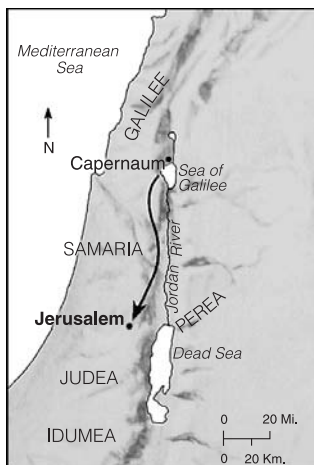
4:38 bestowed no labour: did not work. are entered into their labours: benefit from their labor. 4:40 besought: urged. tarry: stay. abode: stayed. 4:46 nobleman: government official. 4:49 ere: before. 4:52 amend: get better.

4:36–38 The wages Jesus offers are the joy of working for him and seeing the harvest of believers. These wages come to sower and reaper alike, because both find joy in seeing new believers come into Christ's Kingdom. The phrase "other men laboured" (4:38) may refer to the Old Testament prophets and John the Baptist, who paved the way for the Gospel.

4:39 The Samaritan woman immediately shared her experience

### JESUS TEACHES IN JERUSALEM

Between chapters 4 and 5 of John, Jesus ministered throughout Galilee, especially in Capernaum. He had been calling certain men to follow him, but it wasn't until after this trip to Jerusalem (5:1) that he chose his 12 disciples from among them.



with others. Despite her reputation, many took her invitation and came out to meet Jesus. Perhaps there are sins in our past of which we're ashamed. But Christ changes us. As people see these changes, they become curious. Use these opportunities to introduce them to Christ.

4:46–49 This nobleman was probably an officer in Herod's service. He had walked 20 miles to see Jesus and addressed him as "Sir," putting himself under Jesus even though he had legal authority over Jesus.

4:48 This miracle was more than a favor to one official; it was a sign to all people. John's Gospel was written to all mankind to urge faith in Christ. Here a government official had faith that Jesus could do what he claimed. He believed; *then* he saw.

4:50 This government official not only believed Jesus could heal; he also obeyed Jesus by returning home, thus demonstrating his faith. It isn't enough for us to say we believe Jesus can take care of our problems. We need to act as if he can. When you pray about a need or problem, live as though you believe Jesus can do what he says.

4:51 Jesus' miracles were not mere illusions. Although the official's son was 20 miles away, he was healed when Jesus spoke the word. Distance was no problem because Christ has mastery over space. We can never put so much space between ourselves and Christ that he can no longer help us.

4:53 Notice how the nobleman's faith grew. First, he believed enough to ask Jesus to help his son. Second, he believed Jesus' assurance that his son would live, and he acted on it. Third, he and his whole house believed in Jesus. Faith is a gift that grows as we use it.

4:54  
John 2:11

whole house. <sup>54</sup>This is again the second miracle *that* Jesus did, when he was come out of Judaea into Galilee.

*Jesus heals a lame man by the pool (42)*

5:1  
Lev 23:1-2  
Deut 16:1  
John 2:13  
5:2  
Neh 3:1; 12:39

**5** After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup>Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep *market* a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. <sup>3</sup>In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. <sup>4</sup>For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. <sup>5</sup>And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. <sup>6</sup>When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time *in that case*, he saith unto him, **Wilt thou be made whole?**

<sup>7</sup>The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

<sup>8</sup>Jesus saith unto him, **Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.**

<sup>9</sup>And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath. <sup>10</sup>The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry *thy* bed.

5:8  
Matt 9:6  
Mark 2:11  
Luke 5:24  
5:10  
Neh 13:15-20  
Jer 17:21  
Matt 12:2

5:2 *sheep market*: Sheep Gate. 5:3 *impotent*: sick. *halt*: lame. *withered*: paralyzed. 5:4 *at a certain season*: from time to time. 5:6 *case*: condition.

**THE CLAIMS OF CHRIST**

Those who read the life of Christ are faced with one unavoidable question—was Jesus God? Part of any reasonable conclusion has to include the fact that he did claim to be God. We have no other choice but to agree or disagree with his claim. Eternal life is at stake in the choice.

<i>Jesus claimed to be:</i>	<i>Matthew</i>	<i>Mark</i>	<i>Luke</i>	<i>John</i>
the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies	5:17; 14:33; 16:16, 17; 26:31, 53–56; 27:43	14:21, 61, 62	4:16–21; 7:18–23; 18:31; 22:37; 24:44	2:22; 5:45–47; 6:45; 7:40; 10:34–36; 13:18; 15:25; 20:9
the Son of Man	8:20; 12:8; 16:27; 19:28; 20:18, 19; 24:27, 44; 25:31; 26:2, 45, 64	8:31, 38; 9:9; 10:45; 14:41	6:22; 7:33, 34; 12:8; 17:22; 18:8; 31; 19:10; 21:36	1:51; 3:13, 14; 12:23, 34
the Son of God	11:27; 14:33; 16:16, 17; 27:43	3:11, 12; 14:61, 62	8:28; 10:22	1:18; 3:35, 36; 5:18–26; 6:40; 10:36; 11:4; 17:1; 19:7
the Messiah/the Christ	23:9, 10; 26:63, 64	8:29, 30	4:41; 23:1, 2; 24:25–27	4:25, 26; 10:24, 25; 11:27
Teacher/Master one with authority to forgive	26:18	2:1–12	7:48, 49	13:13, 14; 20:28, 29
Lord		5:19		13:13, 14; 20:28, 29
Savior			19:10	3:17; 10:9

5:1 Three feasts required all Jewish males to come to Jerusalem: (1) the Feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread, (2) the Feast of Pentecost (also called Weeks), and (3) the Feast of Tabernacles.

5:3, 4 It is unclear whether an angel actually disturbed the water, or if this was just what the people believed. In either case, Jesus healed a man who had been waiting for 38 years to be healed.

5:6 After 38 years, this man's problem had become a way of life. No one had ever helped him. He had no hope of ever being healed. His situation looked hopeless. But no matter how trapped you feel in your infirmities, God can minister to your deepest needs. Don't let a problem or hardship cause you to lose hope. God may have special work for you to do in spite of your condition, or even because of it. Many have ministered effectively to hurting people because they have triumphed over their own hurts.

5:10 According to the Pharisees, carrying a mat on the Sabbath

was work and was therefore unlawful. It did not break an Old Testament Law, but it broke the Pharisees' *interpretation* of God's command to "remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8). This was just one of hundreds of rules they had added to the Old Testament Law.

5:10 A man who hadn't walked for 38 years was healed, but the Pharisees were more concerned about their petty rules than the life and health of a human being. The Jewish leaders saw both a mighty miracle of healing and a broken rule. They threw the miracle aside as they focused their attention on the broken rule, because the rule was more important to them than the miracle. It is easy to get so caught up in our man-made structures and rules that we forget the people involved. Are your guidelines for living God-made or man-made? Are they helping people, or have they become needless stumbling blocks?

<sup>11</sup>He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.

<sup>12</sup>Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?

<sup>13</sup>And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in *that* place. <sup>14</sup>Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. <sup>15</sup>The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole.

5:14  
John 8:11

### *Jesus claims to be God's Son (43)*

<sup>16</sup>And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day. <sup>17</sup>But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. <sup>18</sup>Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

5:17  
John 9:4; 14:10

5:18  
John 1:1, 18;  
10:30, 33; 20:28  
Phil 2:6  
Titus 2:13  
2 Pet 1:1  
1 Jn 5:21

<sup>19</sup>Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. <sup>20</sup>For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. <sup>21</sup>For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth *them*; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. <sup>22</sup>For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: <sup>23</sup>that all *men* should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

5:19  
John 8:28; 12:49;  
14:10

5:21  
John 11:25

5:22  
John 3:17; 5:27

5:23  
1 Jn 2:23

<sup>24</sup>Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

5:24  
John 3:15; 20:30-31

1 Jn 3:14; 5:13

<sup>25</sup>Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. <sup>26</sup>For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; <sup>27</sup>and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. <sup>28</sup>Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, <sup>29</sup>and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. <sup>30</sup>I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

5:25  
John 4:21; 6:63, 68

5:26  
John 1:4; 6:57  
1 Jn 5:11-12

5:27  
John 9:39  
Acts 10:42; 17:31

5:29  
Dan 12:2  
Matt 25:46  
Acts 24:15

5:13 *wist*: knew. *conveyed himself*: slipped. 5:17 *worketh hitherto*: is working until now. 5:18 *sought the more*: tried even harder. 5:19 *verily*: truly. 5:21 *quickeneth them*: gives them life. 5:24 *condemnation*: judgment. 5:28 *marvel not*: do not be surprised.

5:30  
John 5:19; 6:38

**5:14** This man had been lame, or paralyzed, but now he could walk. This was a great miracle. But he needed an even greater miracle—to have his sins forgiven. The man was delighted to be physically healed, but he had to turn from his sins and seek God's forgiveness to be spiritually healed. God's forgiveness is the greatest gift you will ever receive. Don't neglect his gracious offer.

**5:17** If God stopped every kind of work on the Sabbath, nature would fall into chaos and sin would overrun the world. Genesis 2:2 says that God rested on the seventh day, but this can't mean he stopped doing good. Jesus wanted to teach that when the opportunity to do good presents itself, it should not be ignored, even on the Sabbath.

**5:17f** Jesus was identifying himself with God, his Father. There could be no doubt as to his claim to be God. Jesus does not leave us the option to believe in God while ignoring Jesus (5:23). In response to Jesus' claim, the Pharisees had two choices: to believe him or to accuse him of blasphemy. They chose the second.

**5:19–23** Because of his unity with God, Jesus lives as God wanted him to live. Because of our identification with Jesus, we must honor him and live as he wants us to live. The question "What would Jesus do?" may help us make the right choices.

**5:24** Everlasting life—living forever with God—begins when you accept Jesus Christ as Savior. At that moment, new life begins in you (2 Corinthians 5:17). It is a completed transaction. You still

face physical death, but when Christ returns again, your body will be resurrected to live forever.

**5:25** In saying that the dead would hear his voice, Jesus was talking about the spiritually dead who hear, understand, and accept him. Those who accept God's Word will have eternal life. He was also talking about the physically dead. He raised several dead people while he was on earth, and at his Second Coming all the "dead in Christ" will rise to meet him (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

**5:26** God is the source and Creator of life, for there is no life apart from God, here or hereafter. The life in us is a gift from him (see Deuteronomy 30:20; Psalm 36:9). Because Jesus is eternally existent with God, the Creator, he too is "the life" (14:6) through whom we may live eternally (see 1 John 5:11).

**5:27** The Old Testament mentioned three signs of the coming Messiah. In this chapter, John shows that Jesus has fulfilled all three signs. All power and dominion are given to him as the Son of man (cf. 5:27 with Daniel 7:13, 14). The lame and sick are healed (cf. 5:20, 21 with Isaiah 35:6; Jeremiah 31:8, 9). The dead are raised to life (cf. 5:21, 28 with Deuteronomy 32:39; 1 Samuel 2:6; 2 Kings 5:7).

**5:29** Those who have rebelled against Christ will be resurrected too, but to hear God's judgment against them and to be sentenced to eternity apart from him. There are those who wish to live well on earth, ignore God, and see death as final rest. Jesus does not allow unbelieving people to see death as the end of it all. There is a judgment to face.



5:31  
John 8:13-14

5:32  
John 8:18

5:36  
John 10:25, 38;  
14:11; 15:24  
1 Jn 5:9

5:37  
Deut 4:12  
John 1:18; 8:18  
1 Tim 1:17

5:38  
1 Jn 2:14

5:39  
Luke 24:27, 44  
Acts 13:27  
Rom 2:17-20

5:41  
John 12:43

5:45  
John 9:28  
Rom 2:17

5:46  
Gen 3:15  
Deut 18:15, 18  
Luke 24:27, 44  
Acts 26:22-23

5:47  
Luke 16:31

6:1-13  
//Matt 14:13-21  
//Mark 6:32-44  
//Luke 9:10-17

6:4  
John 11:55

6:5  
John 1:43

6:8  
John 1:40

6:9  
2 Kgs 4:43  
John 21:9, 13

### Jesus supports his claim (44)

<sup>31</sup>If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. <sup>32</sup>There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. <sup>33</sup>Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. <sup>34</sup>But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. <sup>35</sup>He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

<sup>36</sup>But I have greater witness than *that* of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. <sup>37</sup>And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. <sup>38</sup>And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. <sup>39</sup>Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. <sup>40</sup>And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

<sup>41</sup>I receive not honour from men. <sup>42</sup>But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. <sup>43</sup>I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. <sup>44</sup>How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that *cometh* from God only?

<sup>45</sup>Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is *one* that accuseth you, *even* Moses, in whom ye trust. <sup>46</sup>For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. <sup>47</sup>But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

### Jesus feeds five thousand (96/Matthew 14:13–21; Mark 6:30–44; Luke 9:10–17)

**6** After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is *the sea of Tiberias*. <sup>2</sup>And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased. <sup>3</sup>And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. <sup>4</sup>And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.

<sup>5</sup>When Jesus then lifted up *his* eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, **Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?** <sup>6</sup>And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.

<sup>7</sup>Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.

<sup>8</sup>One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, <sup>9</sup>There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?

5:35 *season*: while. 5:38 *abiding*: dwelling. 6:1 *went*: crossed. 6:4 *nigh*: near. 6:5 *company*: crowd. 6:6 *prove*: test. 6:7 *pennyworth*: denarii worth.

**5:31ff** Jesus claimed to be equal with God (5:18), to give eternal life (5:24), to be the source of life (5:26), and to judge sin (5:27). These statements make it clear that Jesus claimed to be divine—an almost unbelievable claim, but one that was supported by another witness, John the Baptist.

**5:39, 40** The religious leaders knew what the Bible said but failed to apply its words to their lives. They knew the teachings of the Scriptures but failed to see the Messiah to whom the Scriptures pointed. They knew the rules but missed the Savior. Entrenched in their own religious system, they refused to let the Son of God change their lives.

**5:41** Whose approval do you seek? The religious leaders enjoyed great prestige in Israel, but their stamp of approval meant nothing to Jesus. He was concerned about God's approval. This is a good principle for us. If even the highest officials in the world approve of our actions and God does not, we should be concerned. But if God approves, even though others don't, we should be content.

**5:45** The Pharisees prided themselves on being the true followers of their ancestor Moses. They followed every one of his laws to the letter and even added some of their own. Jesus' warning that Moses would accuse them stung them to fury. Moses wrote about Jesus (Genesis 3:15; Numbers 21:9; 24:17; Deuteronomy 18:15), yet the religious leaders refused to believe Jesus when he came.

**5:46** It is not known what verse Jesus had in mind. It could have been Genesis 49:10 or more likely Deuteronomy 18:18: "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." Most likely Jesus was chastising them for not desiring to understand the reason for Moses'

writings. Moses wrote so that the people would know and obey God, and these leaders had strayed from those intentions.

**6:5** If anyone knew where to get food, it would have been Philip, because he was from Bethsaida, a town about nine miles away (1:44). Jesus was testing him to strengthen his faith. By asking for a human solution (knowing that there was none), Jesus highlighted the powerful and miraculous act he was about to perform.

**6:5–7** When Jesus asked Philip where they could buy a great amount of bread, Philip started assessing the probable cost. Jesus wanted to teach him that financial resources are not the most important ones. We can limit what God does in us by assuming what is and is not possible. Is there some impossible task you feel God wants you to do? Don't let your estimate of what can't be done keep you from taking on the task. God can do the miracles; trust him to provide the resources.

**6:8, 9** The disciples are contrasted with the youngster who brought what he had. They certainly had more resources than he did, but they knew they didn't have enough, so they didn't give anything at all. The boy gave what little he had, and it made all the difference. If we offer nothing to God, he will have nothing to use. But he can take what little we have and turn it into something great.

**6:8, 9** In performing his miracles, Jesus usually preferred to work through people. Here he took what a young child offered and used it to accomplish one of the most spectacular miracles recorded in the Gospels. Age is no barrier to Christ. Never feel you are too young or too old to be of service to him.



<sup>10</sup>And Jesus said, **Make the men sit down.** Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. <sup>11</sup>And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.

<sup>12</sup>When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, **Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.** <sup>13</sup>Therefore they gathered *them* together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.

<sup>14</sup>Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world. <sup>15</sup>When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.

*Jesus walks on water (97/Matthew 14:22–33; Mark 6:45–52)*

<sup>16</sup>And when even was *now* come, his disciples went down unto the sea, <sup>17</sup>and entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them. <sup>18</sup>And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. <sup>19</sup>So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid. <sup>20</sup>But he saith unto them, **It is I; be not afraid.** <sup>21</sup>Then they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.

*Jesus is the true bread from heaven (99)*

<sup>22</sup>The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but *that* his disciples were gone away alone; <sup>23</sup>(howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks:); <sup>24</sup>when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus. <sup>25</sup>And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?

<sup>26</sup>Jesus answered them and said, **Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.** <sup>27</sup>**Labour not for the**

**6:11** *set:* sitting. *would:* wanted. **6:12** *fragments:* pieces. **6:15** *would:* were about to. **6:16** *even:* evening. **6:18** *arose:* grew rough. **6:19** *five and twenty or thirty furlongs:* three or four miles. *nigh unto:* near to. *ship:* boat. **6:21** *whither:* where. **6:22** *save:* except. **6:23** *howbeit:* however. *nigh:* near. **6:24** *took shipping:* got into boats. **6:26** *verily:* truly.

**6:14**  
Deut 18:15, 18  
Acts 3:22; 7:37

**6:16-23**  
//Matt 14:23-33  
//Mark 6:47-51

**6:19**  
Job 9:8

**6:20**  
Matt 14:27

**6:23**  
John 6:11

**6:27**  
Matt 3:17; 17:5  
Mark 1:11; 9:7  
Luke 3:22  
John 1:33; 4:14;  
6:50-51, 54, 58  
Acts 2:22  
Rom 6:23

**6:13** There is a lesson in the leftovers. God gives in abundance. He takes whatever we can offer him in time, ability, or resources, and multiplies its effectiveness beyond our wildest expectations. If you take the first step in making yourself available to him, he

### JESUS WALKS ON THE WATER

Jesus fed the 5,000 on a hill near the Sea of Galilee (Tiberias) at Bethsaida. The disciples set out across the sea toward Capernaum. But they encountered a storm—and Jesus came walking to them on the water! The boat landed at Gennesaret (Mark 6:53); from there they went back to Capernaum.



will show you how greatly you can be used to advance the work of his Kingdom.

**6:14** “That prophet” is the one prophesied by Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15).

**6:18** The Sea of Galilee is 650 feet below sea level, 150 feet deep, and surrounded by hills. These physical features make it subject to sudden windstorms causing extremely high waves. Such storms were expected on this lake, but they were nevertheless frightening. When Jesus came to the disciples during a storm, walking on the water (three and a half miles from shore), he told them not to be afraid. We often face spiritual and emotional storms and feel tossed about like a small boat on a big lake. In spite of terrifying circumstances, if we trust our lives to Christ for his safekeeping, he will give us peace in the midst of any storm.

**6:18, 19** The disciples, terrified, thought they were seeing a ghost (Mark 6:49). But if they had thought about all they had already seen Jesus do, they could have accepted this miracle. They were frightened—they didn’t expect Jesus to come, and they weren’t prepared for his help. Faith is a mind-set that *expects* God to act. When we act upon this expectation, we can overcome our fears.

**6:26** Jesus criticized the people who followed him only for the physical and temporal benefits, and not because they were spiritually hungry. Many people use religion to gain prestige, comfort, or even votes. But those are self-centered motives. True believers follow Jesus simply because they know his way is the way to live.

**6:29**  
1 Jn 3:23

**6:31**  
Exod 16:15  
Num 11:7-9  
Neh 9:15  
Pss 78:24; 105:40

**6:33**  
John 6:41, 50

**6:35**  
John 4:14; 6:48;  
7:37-38

**6:37**  
John 10:28-29;  
17:2, 24

**6:38**  
John 4:34; 5:30

**6:39**  
John 10:28-29;  
17:12; 18:9

**6:40**  
John 12:45

**6:41**  
John 6:33, 35, 51,  
58

**6:42**  
Luke 4:22  
John 7:27-28

**6:44**  
Jer 31:3  
John 6:65; 12:32

**6:45**  
Isa 54:13  
Jer 31:33-34  
1 Thes 4:9  
Heb 8:10-11

**6:46**  
John 1:18; 5:37;  
7:29

**6:47**  
John 3:15-16, 36

**6:48**  
John 6:35, 41,  
51, 58

meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

<sup>28</sup>Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

<sup>29</sup>Jesus answered and said unto them, **This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.**

<sup>30</sup>They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? <sup>31</sup>Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

<sup>32</sup>Then Jesus said unto them, **Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.** <sup>33</sup>For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

<sup>34</sup>Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

<sup>35</sup>And Jesus said unto them, **I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.** <sup>36</sup>But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. <sup>37</sup>All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. <sup>38</sup>For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. <sup>39</sup>And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. <sup>40</sup>And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

*The Jews disagree that Jesus is from heaven (100)*

<sup>41</sup>The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. <sup>42</sup>And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?

<sup>43</sup>Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, **Murmur not among yourselves.** <sup>44</sup>No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. <sup>45</sup>It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. <sup>46</sup>Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.

<sup>47</sup>Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. <sup>48</sup>I am that

**6:27** the meat: food. **6:34** evermore: always. **6:37** in no wise: by no means.

**6:28, 29** Many sincere seekers for God are puzzled about what he wants them to do. The religions of the world are people's attempt to answer this question. But Jesus' reply is brief and simple: We must believe on him whom God has sent. Satisfying God does not come from the work we *do*, but from whom we *believe*. The first step involves accepting that Jesus is who he claims to be. All spiritual development is built on this affirmation. Declare in prayer to Jesus, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God," and embark on a life of belief that is satisfying to your Creator.

**6:35** People eat bread to satisfy physical hunger and to sustain physical life. We can satisfy spiritual hunger and sustain spiritual life only by a right relationship with Jesus Christ. No wonder he called himself the Bread of life. But bread must be eaten to give life, and Christ must be invited into our daily walk to give spiritual life.

**6:37, 38** Jesus did not work independently of God the Father, but in union with him. This gives us even more assurance of being welcomed into his presence and being protected by him. Jesus' purpose was to do the will of God, not to satisfy his human desires. When we follow Jesus, we should have the same purpose.

**6:39** Jesus said he would not lose even one person that the Father had given him. Thus anyone who makes a sincere commitment to believe in Jesus Christ as Savior is secure in God's promise of eternal life. Christ will not let his people be overcome by Satan and lose their salvation (see also 17:12; Philippians 1:6).

**6:40** Those who put their faith in Jesus will be resurrected from physical death to eternal life with God when Christ comes again (see 1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16).

**6:41** When John says *Jews*, he is referring to the Jewish leaders who were hostile to Jesus, not to Jews in general. John himself was a Jew, and so was Jesus.

**6:41** Some of the people grumbled in disagreement because they could not accept Jesus' claim of divinity. They saw him only as a carpenter from Nazareth. They refused to believe he was God's divine Son, and they could not tolerate his message. Many people reject Christ because they say they cannot believe he is the Son of God. In reality, the claims he makes for their loyalty and obedience are what they can't accept. So to protect themselves from the message, they deny the messenger.

**6:44** God, not man, plays the most active role in salvation. When someone chooses to believe in Jesus Christ as Savior, he does so only in response to the urging of God's Holy Spirit. God does the urging; then we decide whether or not to believe. Thus no one can believe in Jesus without God's help.

**6:45** Jesus was alluding to an Old Testament view of the messianic Kingdom in which all people are taught directly by God (Isaiah 54:13; Jeremiah 31:31-34). He was stressing the importance of not merely hearing, but learning. We are taught by God through the Bible, our experiences, the thoughts the Holy Spirit brings, and other Christians.

**6:47** *Believeth*, as used here, means "continues to believe." We do not believe merely once; we keep on believing or trusting Jesus.

**6:47ff** The religious leaders frequently asked Jesus to prove to them why he was better than the prophets they already had. Jesus here refers to the manna that Moses gave their ancestors in the wilderness (see Exodus 16). This bread was physical and temporal. The people ate it, and it sustained them for a day; but they had to get more bread every day, and this bread could not keep them from dying. Jesus, who is much greater than Moses, offers himself as the spiritual Bread from heaven that satisfies completely and leads to eternal life.

bread of life. <sup>49</sup>Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. <sup>50</sup>This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. <sup>51</sup>I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

<sup>52</sup>The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

<sup>53</sup>Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. <sup>54</sup>Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. <sup>55</sup>For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. <sup>56</sup>He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. <sup>57</sup>As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. <sup>58</sup>This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

<sup>59</sup>These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

### Many disciples desert Jesus (101)

<sup>60</sup>Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard *this*, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?

<sup>61</sup>When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, **Doth this offend you?** <sup>62</sup>*What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?*

<sup>63</sup>**It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.** <sup>64</sup>But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. <sup>65</sup>And he said, **Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.**

<sup>66</sup>From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. <sup>67</sup>Then said Jesus unto the twelve, **Will ye also go away?**

<sup>68</sup>Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. <sup>69</sup>And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

<sup>70</sup>Jesus answered them, **Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?** <sup>71</sup>He spake of Judas Iscariot *the son* of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.

**6:52** strove: argued. **6:55** meat: food. **6:63** quickeneth: gives life. **6:66** went: turned.

**6:51**  
John 10:10-11  
Heb 10:10

**6:54**  
John 6:39-40, 44

**6:56**  
John 14:20; 15:4-7;  
17:21-23  
1 Jn 2:24; 3:24

**6:57**  
John 5:26

**6:58**  
John 6:31

**6:62**  
John 3:13; 17:5  
Acts 1:9-11  
Eph 4:8

**6:63**  
John 3:34  
Rom 8:2  
1 Cor 15:45  
2 Cor 3:6  
1 Pet 3:18

**6:64**  
John 13:11

**6:65**  
John 6:44

**6:68**  
John 6:63

**6:69**  
Matt 16:16  
Mark 1:24; 8:29  
Luke 9:20  
1 Jn 2:20

**6:70-71**  
Matt 10:4; 26:14  
John 13:27

**6:51** How can Jesus give us his flesh as bread to eat? To eat living bread means to unite ourselves in Christ. We are united with Christ in two ways: (1) by believing in his death (the sacrifice of his flesh) and resurrection and (2) by devoting ourselves to living as he requires, depending on his teaching for guidance and trusting in the Holy Spirit for power.

**6:56** This was a shocking message—to eat flesh and drink blood sounded cannibalistic. The idea of drinking any blood, let alone human blood, was repugnant to the religious leaders because the Law forbade it (Leviticus 17:10, 11). Jesus was not talking about literal blood, of course. He was saying that his life had to become their own, but they could not accept this concept. The Gospel writers as well as the apostle Paul used the body and blood imagery in talking about Communion (see 1 Corinthians 11:23–26).

**6:63, 65** The Holy Spirit gives spiritual life (“quickeneth”); without the work of the Holy Spirit we cannot even see our need for new life (14:17). All spiritual renewal begins and ends with God. He reveals truth to us, lives within us, and then enables us to respond to that truth.

**6:66** Why did Jesus’ words cause many of his followers to desert him? (1) They may have realized that he wasn’t going to be the conquering Messiah-King they expected. (2) He refused to give in to their self-centered requests. (3) He emphasized faith, not works. (4) His teachings were difficult to understand, and some of his words were offensive. As we grow in our faith, we may be tempted to turn away because Jesus’ lessons are hard.

Will your response be to give up, ignore certain teachings, or reject Christ? Instead, ask God to show you what the teachings mean and how they apply to your life. Then have the courage to act upon God’s truth.

**6:67** There is no middle ground with Jesus. When he asked the disciples if they would also leave, he was showing that they could either accept or reject him. Jesus was not trying to repel people with his teachings. He was simply telling the truth. The more the people heard Jesus’ real message, the more they divided into two camps—the honest seekers who wanted to understand more, and those who rejected Jesus because they didn’t like what they heard.

**6:67, 68** After many of Jesus’ followers had deserted him, he asked the 12 disciples if they were also going to leave. Peter responded, “Lord, to whom shall we go?” In his straightforward way, Peter answered for all of us—there is no other way. Though there are many philosophies and self-styled authorities, Jesus alone has the words that give eternal life. People look everywhere for eternal life and miss Christ, the only source. Stay with him, especially when you are confused or feel alone.

**6:70** In response to Jesus’ message, some people left; others stayed and truly believed; and some, like Judas, stayed but tried to use Jesus for personal gain. Many today turn away from Christ. Others pretend to follow, going to church for status, approval of family and friends, or business contacts. But there are only two real responses to Jesus—you either accept or reject him. How have you responded to Christ?

**6:71** For more information on Judas, see his Profile in Mark 14, p. 1449.

7:1  
John 5:18; 7:19;  
8:37, 40

7:2  
Lev 23:34  
Deut 16:16

7:3  
Matt 12:46

7:6  
John 2:4; 7:30;  
8:20

7:7  
John 15:18

7:11  
John 11:56

7:12  
John 7:40-43

7:13  
John 9:22-23

7:15  
Matt 13:54  
Luke 2:47  
Acts 4:13

7:16  
John 8:28; 12:49;  
14:10

7:18  
John 5:41, 44;  
8:50, 54

7:19  
John 1:17; 7:1, 25;  
8:37-40

7:20  
John 8:48, 52;  
10:20

7:21-22  
Gen 17:10-13  
Lev 12:3

## 2. Jesus encounters conflict with the religious leaders

Jesus' brothers ridicule him (121)

**7** After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him. <sup>2</sup>Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand. <sup>3</sup>His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. <sup>4</sup>For *there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world.* <sup>5</sup>For neither did his brethren believe in him.

<sup>6</sup>Then Jesus said unto them, *My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready.* <sup>7</sup>The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. <sup>8</sup>Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast: for my time is not yet full come. <sup>9</sup>When he had said these words unto them, he abode *still* in Galilee.

Jesus teaches openly at the Temple (123)

<sup>10</sup>But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. <sup>11</sup>Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he? <sup>12</sup>And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people. <sup>13</sup>Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews.

<sup>14</sup>Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. <sup>15</sup>And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?

<sup>16</sup>Jesus answered them, and said, *My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.* <sup>17</sup>If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. <sup>18</sup>He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him. <sup>19</sup>Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?

<sup>20</sup>The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goest about to kill thee?

<sup>21</sup>Jesus answered and said unto them, *I have done one work, and ye all marvel.* <sup>22</sup>Moses

7:1 would not: did not want to. Jewry: Judea. 7:3 depart hence: leave here. 7:9 abode still: stayed. 7:15 marvelled: were amazed. letters: learning. learned: studied. 7:16 doctrine: teaching. 7:21 ye all marvel: you are all surprised.

**7:2** The Feast of Tabernacles is described in Leviticus 23:33ff. This event occurred in October, about six months after the Passover celebration mentioned in John 6:2–5. The feast commemorated the days when the Israelites wandered in the wilderness and lived in tents (Leviticus 23:43).

**7:3–5** Jesus' brothers had a difficult time believing in him. Some of these brothers would eventually become leaders in the church, but for several years they were embarrassed by him. After Jesus died and rose again, they finally believed. We today have every reason to believe because we have the full record of Jesus' miracles, death, and resurrection. We also have the evidence of what the Gospel has done in people's lives through the centuries. Don't miss this opportunity to believe in God's Son.

**7:7** Because the world hated Jesus, we who follow him can expect that many people will hate us as well. If circumstances are going too well, ask if you are following him as you should. We can be grateful if life goes well, but not at the cost of following Jesus halfheartedly or not at all.

**7:10** Jesus came with the greatest gift ever offered, so why did he often act secretly? The religious leaders hated him and would refuse his gift of salvation no matter what he said or did. The more he taught and worked publicly, the more these leaders would cause trouble for Jesus and his followers. So it was necessary for Jesus to teach and work as quietly as possible. Many people today have the privilege of teaching, preaching, and worshiping publicly with little persecution. These believers should thankfully take advantage of their freedom.

**7:13** The Jewish religious leaders had a great deal of power over the common people. It is apparent that they couldn't do much to Jesus at this time, but they threatened anyone who might publicly support him. Excommunication from the synagogue was one of the reprisals for believing in Jesus (9:22). To a Jew, this was a severe punishment.

**7:13** Everyone was talking about Jesus! But when it came time to speak up for him in public, no one said a word. All were afraid. Fear can stifle our witness. Although many people talk about Christ in church, when it comes to making a public statement about their faith, they are often embarrassed. Jesus says that he will acknowledge us before God if we acknowledge him before others (Matthew 10:32). Be courageous! Speak up for Christ!

**7:16–18** Those who attempt to know God's will and do it will know intuitively that Jesus was telling the truth about himself. Have you ever listened to religious speakers and wondered if they were telling the truth? Test them: (1) Ask if their words agree with or contradict the Bible, and (2) ask if their words point to God and doing his will or to themselves.

**7:19** The Pharisees spent their days trying to achieve holiness by keeping the meticulous rules they had added to God's laws. Jesus' accusation that they didn't keep Moses' laws stung them deeply. In spite of their pompous pride in themselves and their rules, they did not even fulfill a legalistic religion, for they were living far below what the Law of Moses required. Jesus' followers should do *more* than the moral law requires, not by adding to its requirements, but by going beyond the do's and don'ts to the spirit of the Law.

**7:20** Most of the people were probably not aware of the plot to kill Jesus (5:18). There was a small group looking for the right opportunity to kill him, but most were still trying to decide what they believed about him.

**7:21–23** According to Moses' Law, circumcision was to be performed eight days after a baby's birth (Genesis 17:9–14; Leviticus 12:3). This rite was performed on all Jewish males to demonstrate their identity as part of God's covenant people. If the eighth day after birth was a Sabbath, the circumcision would still be performed (even though it was considered work). While the religious leaders allowed certain exceptions to Sabbath laws, they allowed none to Jesus, who was simply showing mercy to those who needed healing.

therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man. <sup>23</sup>If a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day? <sup>24</sup>Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

<sup>25</sup>Then said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this he, whom they seek to kill? <sup>26</sup>But, lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? <sup>27</sup>Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is.

<sup>28</sup>Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, saying, **Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not.** <sup>29</sup>**But I know him: for I am from him, and he hath sent me.** <sup>30</sup>Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.

<sup>31</sup>And many of the people believed on him, and said, When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this *man* hath done?

**7:23**  
John 5:8-10, 16  
Acts 7:8

**7:24**  
Isa 11:3-4  
John 8:15

**7:27**  
John 9:29

**7:28-29**  
John 8:26, 55;  
17:25

**7:30**  
John 8:20

**7:31**  
John 2:23; 8:30;  
10:42; 11:45;  
12:11, 42

#### *Religious leaders attempt to arrest Jesus (124)*

<sup>32</sup>The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him. <sup>33</sup>Then said Jesus unto them, **Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me.** <sup>34</sup>**Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come.**

<sup>35</sup>Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? <sup>36</sup>What *manner* of saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come?

<sup>37</sup>In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, **If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.** <sup>38</sup>**He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.** <sup>39</sup>(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

<sup>40</sup>Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet. <sup>41</sup>Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? <sup>42</sup>Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? <sup>43</sup>So there was a division among the people because of him. <sup>44</sup>And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him.

<sup>45</sup>Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him?

**7:33**  
John 13:33; 16:5,  
10, 16-18

**7:34**  
John 8:21; 13:33

**7:37**  
Isa 55:1  
Rev 22:17

**7:38**  
Prov 18:4  
Isa 58:11  
Ezek 47:1-10  
Joel 3:18

**7:39**  
Rom 8:9  
1 Cor 15:45  
2 Cor 3:17

**7:40**  
Deut 18:15  
John 6:14

**7:42**  
2 Sam 7:12  
Ps 89:3-4  
Mic 5:2  
Matt 1:1; 2:5-10  
Luke 2:4  
John 7:52

**7:43**  
John 9:16; 10:19

**7:23** every whit whole: completely well. **7:26** rulers: authorities. **7:27** howbeit: but. **7:28** cried: cried out. **7:30** take: seize, hands: a hand. **7:32** officers: temple guards. **7:35** dispersed: Jews scattered. *Gentiles*: Greeks. **7:37** cried: cried out. **7:38** belly: heart.

**7:26** This chapter shows the many reactions people had toward Jesus. They called him a good man (7:12), a deceiver (7:12), a devil-possessed man (7:20), the Christ (7:26), and the Prophet (7:40). We must make up our own minds about who Jesus is, knowing that whatever we decide will have eternal consequences.

**7:27** There was a popular tradition that the Messiah would simply appear. But those who believed this tradition were ignoring the Scriptures that clearly predicted the Messiah's birthplace (Micah 5:2).

**7:37** Jesus' words, "Come unto me, and drink" alluded to the theme of many Bible passages that talk about the Messiah's life-giving blessings (Isaiah 12:2, 3; 44:3, 4; 58:11). In promising to give the Holy Spirit to all who believed, Jesus was claiming to be the Messiah, for that was something only the Messiah could do.

**7:38** Jesus used the term *living water* in 4:10 to indicate eternal life. Here he uses the term to refer to the Holy Spirit. The two go together: Wherever the Holy Spirit is accepted, he brings eternal life. Jesus teaches more about the Holy Spirit in chapters 14—16. The Holy Spirit empowered Jesus' followers at Pentecost (Acts 2) and has since been available to all who believe in Jesus as Savior.

**7:40-43** The crowd was asking questions about Jesus. Some believed, others were hostile, and others disqualified Jesus as the Messiah because he was from Nazareth, not Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). But he was born in Bethlehem (Luke 2:1-7), although he grew up in Nazareth. He may have had a pronounced Galilean accent. If they had looked more carefully, they would not have jumped to the wrong conclusions. When you search for God's truth, make sure you look carefully and thoughtfully at the Bible with an open heart and mind. Don't jump to conclusions before knowing more of what the Bible says.

**7:44-46** Although the Romans ruled Palestine, they gave the Jewish religious leaders authority over minor civil and religious affairs. The religious leaders controlled their own Temple guards and gave the officers power to arrest anyone causing a disturbance or breaking any of their ceremonial laws. Because these leaders had developed hundreds of trivial laws, it was almost impossible for anyone, even the leaders themselves, not to break, neglect, or ignore at least a few of them some of the time. But these officers couldn't find one reason to arrest Jesus. And as they listened to him to try to find evidence, they couldn't help hearing the wonderful words he said.



7:46  
Matt 7:28

7:48  
John 12:42

7:50  
John 3:1-2; 19:39

7:51  
Deut 1:16

7:52  
Isa 9:1-2  
Matt 4:14-16  
John 1:46

8:2  
Matt 26:55

8:5  
Lev 20:10  
Deut 22:22-24  
Job 31:11

8:6  
Matt 22:15

8:7  
Deut 17:7

8:11  
John 5:14

8:12  
Isa 9:1-2  
John 1:4-5, 9; 3:19;  
9:5; 12:35-36, 46  
2 Cor 4:6

<sup>46</sup>The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.

<sup>47</sup>Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived? <sup>48</sup>Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? <sup>49</sup>But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.

<sup>50</sup>Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,) <sup>51</sup>Doth our law judge *any* man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?

<sup>52</sup>They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet. <sup>53</sup>And every man went unto his own house.

### *Jesus forgives an adulterous woman (125)*

**8** Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. <sup>2</sup>And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. <sup>3</sup>And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, <sup>4</sup>they say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. <sup>5</sup>Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?

<sup>6</sup>This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with *his* finger wrote on the ground, *as though he heard them not*. <sup>7</sup>So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, **He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her**. <sup>8</sup>And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

<sup>9</sup>And they which heard *it*, being convicted by *their own* conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, *even* unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. <sup>10</sup>When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, **Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?**

<sup>11</sup>She said, No man, Lord.

And Jesus said unto her, **Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.**

### *Jesus is the light of the world (126)*

<sup>12</sup>Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, **I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.**

**8:6** *tempting*: testing. *to accuse*: grounds for accusing.

**7:46-69** The Jewish leaders saw themselves as an elite group who alone had the truth, and they resisted the truth about Christ because it wasn't *theirs* to begin with. It is easy to think that we have the truth and that those who disagree with us do not have any truth at all. But God's truth is available to everyone. Don't repeat the Pharisees' self-centered and narrow attitude.

**7:50-52** This passage offers additional insight into Nicodemus, the Pharisee who visited Jesus at night (chapter 3). Apparently Nicodemus had become a secret believer. Since most of the Pharisees hated Jesus and wanted to kill him, Nicodemus risked his reputation and high position even though he only spoke up indirectly for Jesus. His statement was bold, and the Pharisees immediately became suspicious. After Jesus' death, Nicodemus brought spices for his body (19:39). That is the last time he is mentioned in Scripture, but tradition says he was baptized by Peter and John and was later forced to step down from his position as a member of the Council.

**7:51** Nicodemus confronted the Pharisees with their failure to keep their own laws. The Pharisees saw themselves losing ground—the Temple guards came back impressed by Jesus (7:46), and one of the Pharisees' own, Nicodemus, was defending him. With their hypocritical motives being exposed and their prestige slowly eroding, they began to move to protect themselves. Pride would interfere with their ability to reason, and soon they would become obsessed with getting rid of Jesus just to save face. What was good and right no longer mattered; they continued to break their own laws by plotting to murder Jesus.

**8:3-6** The Jewish leaders had already disregarded the Law by arresting the woman without the man. The Law required that both parties to adultery be stoned (Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22). The leaders were using the woman as a trap so they could trick Jesus. If Jesus said the woman should not be stoned, they would accuse him of violating Moses' Law. If he urged them to execute her, they would report him to the Romans, who did not permit the Jews to carry out their own executions.

**8:7** This is a significant statement about judging others. Because he upheld the legal penalty for adultery, stoning, Jesus could not be accused of being against the Law. But by saying that only a sinless person could throw the first stone, he highlighted the importance of compassion and forgiveness. When others are caught in sin, are you quick to pass judgment? To do so is to act as though you have never sinned. It is God's role to judge, not ours. Our role is to show forgiveness and compassion.

**8:9** When Jesus said that only someone who had not sinned should throw the first stone, the leaders slipped quietly away, from eldest to youngest. Evidently the older men were more aware of their sins than the younger. Age and experience often temper youthful self-righteousness. But whatever your age, take an honest look at your life. Recognize your sinful nature, and look for ways to help others rather than hurt them.

**8:11** Jesus didn't condemn the woman accused of adultery, but neither did he ignore or condone her sin. He told her to go and sin no more. Jesus stands ready to forgive any sin in your life, but confession and repentance mean a change of heart. With God's help we can accept Christ's forgiveness and stop our wrongdoing.

**8:12** To understand what Jesus meant by *light of the world*, see the notes on 1:4 and 1:4, 5.

**8:12** Jesus was speaking in the treasury—the part of the Temple where the offerings were put (8:20), and where candles burned to symbolize the pillar of fire that led the people of Israel through the wilderness (Exodus 13:21, 22). In this context, Jesus called himself the Light of the world. The pillar of fire represented God's presence, protection, and guidance. Likewise, Jesus brings God's presence, protection, and guidance. Is he the Light of *your* world?

**8:12** What does it mean to follow Christ? As a soldier follows his captain, so we should follow Christ, our commander. As a slave follows his master, so we should follow Christ, our Lord. As we follow the advice of a trusted counselor, so we should follow Jesus' commands to us in Scripture. As we follow the laws of our nation, so we should follow the laws of the Kingdom of heaven.



<sup>13</sup>The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.

<sup>14</sup>Jesus answered and said unto them, *Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.* <sup>15</sup>Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. <sup>16</sup>And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. <sup>17</sup>It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. <sup>18</sup>I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.

<sup>19</sup>Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father?

Jesus answered, *Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.* <sup>20</sup>These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.

### *Jesus warns of coming judgment (127)*

<sup>21</sup>Then said Jesus again unto them, *I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.*

<sup>22</sup>Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come.

<sup>23</sup>And he said unto them, *Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.* <sup>24</sup>I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins.

<sup>25</sup>Then said they unto him, Who art thou?

And Jesus saith unto them, *Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning.* <sup>26</sup>I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him. <sup>27</sup>They understood not that he spake to them of the Father.

<sup>28</sup>Then said Jesus unto them, *When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.* <sup>29</sup>And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him. <sup>30</sup>As he spake these words, many believed on him.

### *Jesus speaks about God's true children (128)*

<sup>31</sup>Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, *If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

<sup>33</sup>They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

<sup>34</sup>Jesus answered them, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.* <sup>35</sup>And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: *but* the Son abideth ever. <sup>36</sup>If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. <sup>37</sup>I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. <sup>38</sup>I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.

<sup>39</sup>They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father.

**8:13** *bearest record:* are bearing witness. **8:15** *after:* according to. **8:20** *hands:* a hand. **8:21** *whither:* where. **8:33** *seed:* descendants. **8:34** *verily:* truly.

**8:14**  
John 7:28; 9:29

**8:16**  
John 5:30

**8:17-18**  
Deut 17:6; 19:15  
John 5:37  
1 Jn 5:7-9

**8:19**  
John 14:7, 9

**8:20**  
Mark 12:41  
John 7:30

**8:21**  
John 7:34, 36;  
13:33

**8:22**  
John 7:35

**8:23**  
John 3:31; 17:14

**8:24**  
Exod 3:14-15  
John 4:26; 8:28,  
58; 13:19

**8:26**  
John 3:32-34;  
12:49

**8:28**  
John 3:14; 5:19;  
8:24; 12:32

**8:29**  
John 4:34; 6:38;  
8:16; 14:10; 16:32

**8:30**  
John 7:31

**8:31**  
John 15:7  
2 Jn 1:9

**8:32**  
Rom 8:2  
2 Cor 3:17  
Gal 5:1, 13

**8:33**  
Matt 3:9  
Luke 8:8

**8:34**  
Rom 6:16, 20  
2 Pet 2:19

**8:35**  
Gen 21:10  
Gal 4:30

**8:39**  
Matt 3:9  
John 8:33  
Gal 3:7, 14, 29

**8:13, 14** The Pharisees thought Jesus was either insane or a liar. Jesus provided them with a third alternative: He was telling the truth. Because most of the Pharisees refused to consider the third alternative, they never recognized him as Messiah and Lord. If you are seeking to know who Jesus is, do not close any door before looking through it honestly. Only with an open mind will you know the truth that he is Messiah and Lord.

**8:13-18** The Pharisees argued that Jesus' claim was legally invalid because he had no other witness. Jesus responded that his confirming witness was God himself. He and God made two witnesses, the number required by the Law (Deuteronomy 19:15).

**8:20** The Temple treasury was located in the Court of the Women. In this area, 13 collection boxes were set up to receive money offerings. Seven of the boxes were for the Temple tax; the other 6 were for freewill offerings. On another occasion, a widow placed her money in one of these boxes and Jesus taught a profound lesson from her action (Luke 21:1-4).

**8:24** People will die in their sins if they reject Christ, because they are rejecting the only way to be rescued from sin. Sadly, many are so taken up with the values of this world that they are blind to the priceless gift Christ offers. Where are you looking? Don't focus on this world's values and miss what is most valuable—eternal life with God.

**8:32** Jesus himself is the truth that makes us free (8:36). He is the source of truth, the perfect standard of what is right. He frees us from continued slavery to sin, from self-deception, and from deception by Satan. He shows us clearly the way to eternal life with God. Thus Jesus does not give us freedom to do what we want, but freedom to follow God. As we seek to serve God, Jesus' perfect truth frees us to be all that God meant us to be.

**8:34, 35** Sin has a way of enslaving us, controlling us, dominating us, and dictating our actions. Jesus can free you from this slavery that keeps you from becoming the person God created you to be. If sin is restraining, mastering, or enslaving you, Jesus can break its power over your life.

Jesus saith unto them, **If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.** <sup>40</sup>**But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.** <sup>41</sup>**Ye do the deeds of your father.**

**8:41**  
Deut 32:6  
Isa 63:16; 64:8  
Mal 1:6

**8:42**  
1 Jn 5:1

**8:44**  
Gen 3:4; 4:9  
1 Jn 3:8

**8:45**  
John 18:37

**8:47**  
1 Jn 4:6

Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, *even* God.

<sup>42</sup>Jesus said unto them, **If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.** <sup>43</sup>**Why do ye not understand my speech? *even* because ye cannot hear my word.** <sup>44</sup>**Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.** <sup>45</sup>**And because I tell *you* the truth, ye believe me not.** <sup>46</sup>**Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?** <sup>47</sup>**He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear *them* not, because ye are not of God.**

*Jesus states he is eternal (129)*

<sup>48</sup>Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?

<sup>49</sup>Jesus answered, **I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me.** <sup>50</sup>**And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.** <sup>51</sup>**Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.**

**8:50**  
John 5:41

**8:51**  
John 5:24;  
11:25-26

**8:53**  
John 4:12

**8:54**  
John 16:14; 17:5

**8:55**  
John 7:28-29;  
15:10

**8:56**  
Gen 18:18;  
22:17-18  
Matt 13:17  
Heb 11:13

**8:58**  
Exod 3:14  
Isa 43:10, 13  
John 1:1; 8:24, 28

<sup>52</sup>Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. <sup>53</sup>Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?

<sup>54</sup>Jesus answered, **If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God: <sup>55</sup>yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying.** <sup>56</sup>**Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.**

<sup>57</sup>Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?

<sup>58</sup>Jesus said unto them, **Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.** <sup>59</sup>Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

**8:43** *my speech:* what I say. **8:44** *lusts:* desires. *abode not:* does not stand. **8:46** *convinceth me:* can prove me guilty. **8:51** *verily:* truly. *keep my saying:* keeps my word. **8:53** *makest thou thyself:* do you make yourself out to be. **8:59** *cast:* throw.

**8:41** Jesus made a distinction between illegitimate children and true children. The religious leaders were descendants of Abraham (founder of the Jewish nation) and therefore claimed to be sons of God. But their actions showed them to be true sons of Satan, for they lived under Satan's guidance. True sons of Abraham (faithful followers of God) would not act as they did. Your church membership and family connections will not make you a true son of God. Your true father is the one you obey.

**8:43** The religious leaders were prevented from understanding because they refused to listen. Satan used their stubbornness, pride, and prejudices to keep them from believing in Jesus.

**8:44, 45** The attitudes and actions of these leaders clearly identified them as followers of Satan. They may not have been conscious of this, but their hatred of truth, their lies, and their murderous intentions indicated how much control Satan had over them. They were his tools in carrying out his plans; they spoke the same language of lies. Satan still uses people to obstruct God's work (Genesis 4:8; Romans 5:12; 1 John 3:12).

**8:46, 47** In a number of places Jesus intentionally challenged his listeners to test him. He welcomed those who wanted to question his claims and character as long as they were willing to follow through on what they discovered. His challenge clarifies the two most frequent reasons that people miss encountering him: (1) They never accept his challenge to test him, or (2) they test him but are not willing to believe what they discover. Have you made either of those mistakes?

**8:51** To keep Jesus' saying means to hear his words and obey them. When Jesus says those who obey won't die, he is talking

about spiritual death, not physical death. Even physical death, however, will eventually be overcome. Those who follow Jesus will be raised to live eternally with him.

**8:56** God told Abraham, father of the Jewish nation, that through him all nations would be blessed (Genesis 12:1-7; 15:1-21). Abraham had been able to see this through the eyes of faith. Jesus, a descendant of Abraham, blessed all people through his death, resurrection, and offer of salvation.

**8:58** This is one of the most powerful statements uttered by Jesus. When he says he existed before Abraham was born, he undeniably proclaims his divinity. Not only did Jesus say he existed before Abraham; he also applied God's holy name (I AM—Exodus 3:14) to himself. This claim demands a response. It cannot be ignored. The Jewish leaders tried to stone him for blasphemy because he claimed equality with God. But Jesus is God. How have you responded to Jesus, the Son of God?

**8:59** In accordance with the law in Leviticus 24:16, the religious leaders were ready to stone Jesus for claiming to be God. They well understood what Jesus was claiming, and since they didn't believe him, they charged him with blasphemy. How ironic that they were really the blasphemers, cursing and attacking the very God they claimed to serve!

*Jesus heals the man who was born blind (148)*

**9** And as *Jesus* passed by, he saw a man which was blind from *his* birth. <sup>2</sup>And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

<sup>3</sup>Jesus answered, **Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.** <sup>4</sup>I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. <sup>5</sup>As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

<sup>6</sup>When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, <sup>7</sup>and said unto him, **Go, wash in the pool of Siloam,** (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

<sup>8</sup>The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? <sup>9</sup>Some said, This is he: others *said*, He is like him.

But he said, I am *he*.

<sup>10</sup>Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened?

<sup>11</sup>He answered and said, A man that is called *Jesus* made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.

<sup>12</sup>Then said they unto him, Where is he?

He said, I know not.

*Religious leaders question the blind man (149)*

<sup>13</sup>They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. <sup>14</sup>And it was the sabbath day when *Jesus* made the clay, and opened his eyes. <sup>15</sup>Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

<sup>16</sup>Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

<sup>17</sup>They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes?

He said, He is a prophet.

<sup>18</sup>But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. <sup>19</sup>And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see?

<sup>20</sup>His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: <sup>21</sup>but by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age; ask him: he shall speak for himself. <sup>22</sup>These *words* spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was *Christ*, he should be put out of the synagogue. <sup>23</sup>Therefore said his parents, He is of age; ask him.

**9:2** Master: Rabbi. **9:3** made manifest: revealed. **9:6** spittle: saliva. **9:7** came: came back. **9:13** aforetime: formerly.

**9:2**  
Exod 20:5  
Ezek 18:20  
Luke 13:2  
John 9:34

**9:3**  
John 11:4

**9:4**  
John 5:17; 11:9;  
12:35

**9:5**  
Isa 49:6  
John 1:4-5; 9; 8:12;  
12:46

**9:6**  
Mark 8:23

**9:7**  
2 Kgs 5:10  
Isa 35:5

**9:8**  
Acts 3:10

**9:14**  
Luke 13:14  
John 5:9

**9:16**  
John 3:2; 7:43

**9:17**  
Matt 21:11

**9:22**  
Luke 6:22  
John 7:13; 12:42;  
16:2; 19:38  
Acts 5:13

**9:1ff** In chapter 9, we see four different reactions to *Jesus*. The neighbors revealed surprise and skepticism; the Pharisees showed disbelief and prejudice; the parents believed but kept quiet for fear of excommunication; and the healed man showed consistent growing faith. Each reaction to *Jesus* allowed the man to reach a clearer understanding of the one who had healed him.

**9:2, 3** A common belief in Jewish culture was that calamity or suffering was the result of some great sin. But *Christ* used this man's suffering to teach about faith and to glorify God. We live in a fallen world where good behavior is not always rewarded and bad behavior not always punished. Therefore, innocent people sometimes suffer. If God took suffering away whenever we asked, we would follow him for comfort and convenience, not out of love and devotion. Regardless of the reasons for our suffering, *Jesus* has the power to help us deal with it. When you suffer from a disease, tragedy, or handicap, try not to ask, "Why did this happen to me?" or "What did I do wrong?" Instead, ask God to give you strength for the trial and offer you a clearer perspective on what is happening.

**9:6** When *Jesus* spit on the ground and made mud in order to repair the man's eyes, he was working with original materials. Genesis 2:7 states that God formed Adam's body from the dust of the ground. *Jesus* was demonstrating a creator's awareness of the materials he first used to shape the human body.

**9:7** The pool of Siloam was made by Hezekiah. His workers built an underground tunnel from a spring outside the city walls to carry water into the city. Thus the people could always get water without fear of being attacked. This was especially important in times of siege (see 2 Kings 20:20; 2 Chronicles 32:30).

**9:13-17** While the Pharisees questioned and debated about *Jesus*, people were being healed and lives were being changed. Their skepticism was based not on sufficient evidence, but on jealousy of *Jesus*' popularity.

**9:14-16** The Jewish Sabbath, Saturday, was the weekly holy day of rest. The Pharisees had made a long list of specific do's and don'ts regarding the Sabbath. Kneading the clay and healing the man were considered work and therefore were forbidden. *Jesus* may have made the clay in order to emphasize his teaching about

9:24  
Josh 7:19

24 Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.

25 He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner *or no*, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.

26 Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes?

27 He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear *it* again? will ye also be his disciples?

9:28  
John 5:45

28 Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. 29 We know that God spake unto Moses: *as for this fellow*, we know not from whence he is.

9:29  
John 8:14

30 The man answered and said unto them, Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and *yet* he hath opened mine eyes. 31 Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

9:31

Job 27:8-9  
Pss 34:15; 66:18;  
145:19  
Prov 15:29  
Isa 1:15  
Jer 11:11; 14:12  
Mic 3:4  
Zech 7:13

32 Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. 33 If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

34 They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.

9:33

John 3:2

*Jesus teaches about spiritual blindness (150)*

9:34

John 9:2

35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, **Dost thou believe on the Son of God?**

36 He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?

9:37

John 4:26

37 And Jesus said unto him, **Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.**

38 And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

9:39

Luke 4:18

39 And Jesus said, **For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.**

9:40

Rom 2:19

40 And *some* of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also?

9:41

John 15:22

41 Jesus said unto them, **If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.**

*Jesus is the Good Shepherd (151)*

**10** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. 2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. 4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. 5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. 6 This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

7 Then said Jesus unto them again, **Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. 9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find**

**9:27** hear: listen. *wherefore would ye:* why do you want to. **9:28** reviled: insulted. **9:30** herein is a marvellous: here is an amazing. **9:36** Lord: sir. **10:1** verily: truly. *sheepfold:* sheep pen. *climbeth up:* climbs in. **10:3** porter: gatekeeper. **10:7** door of: gate for.

10:2

Acts 20:28

10:4

Ps 80:2

John 10:27

10:6

John 16:25

10:7

John 14:6

10:8

Jer 23:1-2

Ezek 34:2-3

10:9

Ps 118:20

John 14:6

the Sabbath—that it is right to care for others' needs even if it involves working on a day of rest.

**9:25** By now the man who had been blind had heard the same questions over and over. He did not know how he was healed, but he knew that his life had been miraculously changed, and he was not afraid to tell the truth. You don't need to know all the answers in order to share Christ with others. It is important to tell them how he has changed your life. Then trust that God will use your words.

**9:28, 34** The man's new faith was severely tested. He was cursed and evicted from the Temple. Persecution may come when you follow Jesus. You may lose friends; you may even lose your life. But no one can ever take away the eternal life Jesus gives you.

**9:38** This man gained not only physical sight but also spiritual sight as he recognized Jesus first as a prophet (9:17), then as his Lord. When you turn to Christ, you begin to see him differently. Peter tells us to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord

and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). If you want to know more about Jesus, keep trusting him in every area of life.

**9:40, 41** The Pharisees were shocked that Jesus thought they were spiritually blind. Jesus countered that only blindness (stubbornness and stupidity) could excuse their behavior. To those who remained open (recognized how sin had truly blinded them from knowing the truth), he gave spiritual understanding and insight. But he rejected those who had become complacent, self-satisfied, and thus blind.

**10:1** At night, sheep were often gathered into a sheepfold to protect them from thieves, weather, or wild animals. The sheepfolds were caves, sheds, or open areas surrounded by walls made of stone or branches. The shepherd often slept across the doorway of the fold to protect the sheep. Just as a shepherd cares for his sheep, Jesus, the Good Shepherd, cares for his flock (those who follow him). The prophet Ezekiel, in predicting the coming of the Messiah, called him a Shepherd (Ezekiel 34:23).

pasture. <sup>10</sup>The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly.

<sup>11</sup>I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup>But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. <sup>13</sup>The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

<sup>14</sup>I am the good shepherd, and know my *sheep*, and am known of mine. <sup>15</sup>As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup>And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd. <sup>17</sup>Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. <sup>18</sup>No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

<sup>19</sup>There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. <sup>20</sup>And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him? <sup>21</sup>Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?

### Religious leaders surround Jesus at the Temple (152)

<sup>22</sup>And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. <sup>23</sup>And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch. <sup>24</sup>Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.

<sup>25</sup>Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. <sup>26</sup>But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. <sup>27</sup>My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: <sup>28</sup>and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand. <sup>29</sup>My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand. <sup>30</sup>I and my Father are one.

**10:12** hireling: hired hand. **10:16** fold: flock. **10:24** make us to doubt: keep us in suspense. **10:28** pluck: snatch.

**10:10**  
John 5:40  
Acts 20:29  
2 Pet 2:1

**10:11**  
Isa 40:11  
Ezek 34:11-16, 23  
Heb 13:20  
1 Pet 2:25  
1 Jn 3:16  
Rev 7:17

**10:14**  
2 Tim 2:19

**10:15**  
Matt 11:27

**10:16**  
Isa 56:8  
Ezek 37:24  
John 11:52  
Eph 2:14-18

**10:17-18**  
Phil 2:8-9  
Heb 5:8; 7:16

**10:23**  
Acts 3:11; 5:12

**10:24**  
Luke 22:67

**10:25**  
John 5:36; 10:38;  
14:11

**10:26**  
John 8:47

**10:28**  
John 6:37, 39;  
17:12

**10:29**  
John 14:28  
17:2, 6, 24

**10:10** In contrast to the thief who takes, Jesus gives. The life he gives now is abundantly richer and fuller. It is eternal, yet it begins immediately. Life in him is lived on a higher plane because of his overflowing forgiveness, love, and guidance.

**10:11, 12** A hired hand tends the sheep for money, while the shepherd does it for love. The shepherd owns the sheep and is committed to them. Jesus is not merely doing a job, he is committed to love and even lay down his life for us. False teachers and fake prophets do not have this commitment.

**10:16** The "other sheep" were non-Jews. Jesus came to save Gentiles as well as Jews. This is an insight into his worldwide mission—to die for the sins of the whole world. People tend

to want to restrict God's blessings to their own group, but Jesus refuses to be limited by the fences we build.

**10:17, 18** Jesus' death and resurrection, as part of God's plan for the salvation of the world, were under God's full control. No one could kill Jesus without his consent.

**10:19, 20** If Jesus had been merely a man, his claims to be God would have proven him insane. But his miracles proved his words true—he really was God. The Jewish leaders could not see beyond their own prejudices, and they tried to put Jesus in a human "box." But Jesus was not limited by their restricted vision.

**10:22, 23** The Feast of the Dedication commemorated the cleansing of the Temple under Judas Maccabeus in 164 B.C. after Antiochus Epiphanes had defiled it by sacrificing a pig on the altar of burnt offering. It was celebrated toward the end of December. This is also the present-day Feast of Lights, or Hanukkah.

**10:23** Solomon's porch was a roofed walkway supported by large stone columns, just inside the walls of the Temple courtyard.

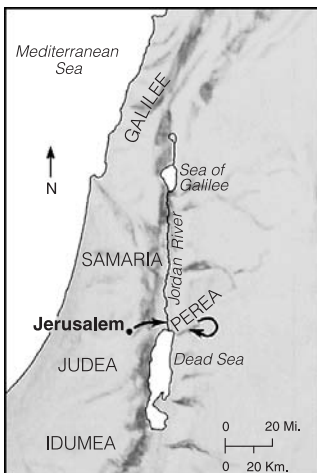
**10:24** Many people asking for proof do so for the wrong reasons. Most of these questioners didn't want to follow Jesus in the way that required them to submit to his leadership. They hoped he would declare himself Messiah for one of two other reasons. First, they, along with the disciples and everyone else in the Jewish nation, would have been delighted to have him drive out the Romans. Many of them didn't think he was going to do that, however. These doubters hoped he would identify himself so they could accuse him of telling lies (as the Pharisees did in 8:13).

**10:28, 29** Just as a shepherd protects his sheep, Jesus protects his people from eternal harm. While believers can expect to suffer on earth, Satan cannot harm their souls or take away their eternal life with God. There are many reasons to be afraid here on earth, because this is Satan's domain. But if you choose to follow Jesus, he will give you everlasting safety.

**10:30, 31** This is the clearest statement of Jesus' divinity he ever made. Jesus and his Father are not the same person, but they are one in essence and nature. Thus Jesus is not merely a good

### MINISTRY BEYOND THE JORDAN

Jesus had been in Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles (7:2); then he preached in various towns, probably in Judea, before returning to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Dedication. He again angered the religious leaders who tried to arrest him, but he left the city and went beyond the Jordan to preach.





<sup>31</sup>Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. <sup>32</sup>Jesus answered them, **Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?**

**10:33**  
Lev 24:16  
Matt 26:63-66  
John 1:1, 18; 5:18;  
20:28  
Rom 9:5  
Phil 2:6  
Titus 2:13  
2 Pet 1:1  
1 Jn 5:20

and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.

**10:34**  
<sup>1</sup>Ps 82:6

<sup>34</sup>Jesus answered them, **Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?** <sup>35</sup>**If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;** <sup>36</sup>**say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?** <sup>37</sup>**If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.** <sup>38</sup>**But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.**

**10:36**  
John 5:17-20

<sup>39</sup>Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand, <sup>40</sup>and went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode.

**10:42**  
John 2:23; 7:31;  
8:30; 11:45;  
12:11, 42

<sup>41</sup>And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true. <sup>42</sup>And many believed on him there.

**3. Jesus encounters crucial events in Jerusalem  
Lazarus becomes ill and dies (165)**

**11:1**  
Matt 21:17  
Luke 10:38  
**11:2**  
John 12:3

**11** Now a certain *man* was sick, *named* Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. <sup>2</sup>(It was *that* Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) <sup>3</sup>Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

**10:39** take: seize. **10:40** abode: stayed. **10:41** resorted unto: came to. **11:2** ointment: perfume.

**THE NAMES OF JESUS**

In different settings, Jesus gave himself names that pointed to special roles he was ready to fulfill for people. Some of these refer back to the Old Testament promises of the Messiah. Others were ways to help people understand him.

Reference	Name	Significance
6:27	Son of Man	Jesus' favorite reference to himself. It emphasized his humanity—but the way he used it, it was a claim to divinity.
6:35	Bread of life	Refers to his life-giving role—that he is the only source of eternal life.
8:12	Light of the world	Light is a symbol of spiritual truth. Jesus is the universal answer for people's need of spiritual truth.
10:7	Door for the sheep	Jesus is the only way into God's Kingdom.
10:11	Good Shepherd	Jesus appropriated the prophetic images of the Messiah pictured in the Old Testament. This is a claim to divinity, focusing on Jesus' love and guidance.
11:25	The Resurrection and the Life	Not only is Jesus the source of life; he is the power over death.
14:6	The Way, the Truth, and the Life	Jesus is the method, the message, and the meaning for all people. With this title, he summarized his purpose in coming to earth.
15:1	The Vine	This title has an important second part, "ye are the branches." As in so many of his other names, Jesus reminds us that just as branches gain life from the vine and cannot live apart from it, so we are completely dependent on Christ for spiritual life.

teacher—he is God. His claim to be God was unmistakable. The religious leaders wanted to kill him for it, because their laws said that anyone claiming to be God should die. Nothing could persuade them that Jesus' claim was true.

**10:31** The Jewish leaders attempted to carry out the direction found in Leviticus 24:16 regarding those who blaspheme (claim to be God). They intended to stone Jesus.

**10:34–36** Jesus refers to Psalm 82:6 where the Israelite judges are called "gods" (see also Exodus 4:16; 7:1). If God called the Israelite judges "gods" because they were agents of God's revelation and will, how could it be blasphemy for Jesus to call himself the Son of God? Jesus was rebuking them because he is the Son of God in a unique, unparalleled relationship of oneness with the Father.

**10:35** "The scripture cannot be broken" is a clear statement of the truth of the Bible. If we accept Christ as Lord, we also accept his confirmation of the Bible as God's Word.

**11:1** The village of Bethany was located about two miles east of Jerusalem on the road to Jericho. It was near enough to Jerusalem for them to be in danger, but far enough away so as not to attract attention prematurely.

**11:3** As their brother grew very sick, Mary and Martha turned to Jesus for help. They believed in his ability to help because they had seen his miracles. We, too, know of his miracles, both from Scripture and through changed lives we have seen. When we need extraordinary help, Jesus offers extraordinary resources. We should not hesitate to ask him for help.

<sup>4</sup> When Jesus heard *that*, he said, **This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.** <sup>5</sup> Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. <sup>6</sup> When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was. <sup>7</sup> Then after that saith he to *his* disciples, Let us go into Judaea again.

<sup>8</sup> *His* disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?

<sup>9</sup> Jesus answered, **Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. <sup>10</sup> But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.** <sup>11</sup> These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, **Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.**

<sup>12</sup> Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. <sup>13</sup> Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.

<sup>14</sup> Then said Jesus unto them plainly, **Lazarus is dead. <sup>15</sup> And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.**

<sup>16</sup> Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellowdisciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

### Jesus comforts Mary and Martha (166)

<sup>17</sup> Then when Jesus came, he found that he had *lain* in the grave four days already. <sup>18</sup> Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off: <sup>19</sup> and many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. <sup>20</sup> Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat *still* in the house. <sup>21</sup> Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. <sup>22</sup> But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give *it* thee.

<sup>23</sup> Jesus saith unto her, **Thy brother shall rise again.**

<sup>24</sup> Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

<sup>25</sup> Jesus said unto her, **I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: <sup>26</sup> and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?**

**11:4** *thereby*: through it. **11:6** *abode*: stayed. **11:8** *Master*: Rabbi. *of late*: a short time ago. **11:13** *howbeit*: however. **11:15** *to the intent*: that. **11:17** *lain in the grave*: been in the tomb. **11:18** *nigh unto*: near to. *fifteen furlongs*: two miles. **11:20** *sat still in the house*: stayed at home. **11:21** *had not*: would not have.

**11:4**  
John 9:3

**11:8**  
John 8:59; 10:31

**11:9**  
John 9:4

**11:10**  
John 12:35

**11:11**  
Dan 12:2  
Matt 9:24; 27:52  
Mark 5:39  
Luke 8:52  
Acts 7:60  
1 Cor 11:30

**11:16**  
Matt 10:3  
John 14:5;  
20:24-28; 21:2  
Acts 1:3

**11:17**  
John 11:39

**11:20**  
Luke 10:38-42

**11:22**  
John 16:30

**11:23-24**  
Dan 12:2  
John 5:28-29  
Acts 4:15  
Phil 3:21  
1 Thes 4:14

**11:25**  
John 1:4; 3:36;  
5:21; 6:39-40; 14:6  
Col 1:18; 3:4  
1 Jn 1:1-2; 5:10-11  
Rev 1:17-18

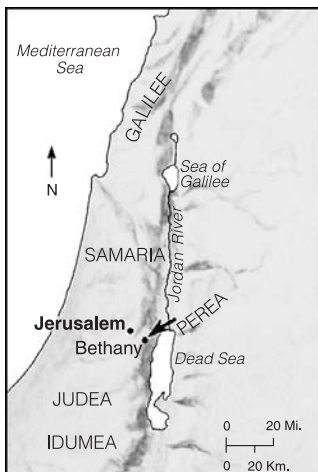
**11:26**  
John 8:51

**11:4** Any trial a believer faces can ultimately bring glory to God because God can bring good out of any bad situation. When trouble comes, do you grumble, complain, and blame God, or do you see your problems as opportunities to honor him?

**11:5-7** Jesus loved this family and often stayed with them. He knew their pain but did not respond immediately. His delay had a specific purpose. God's timing, especially his delays, may make us think he is not answering or is not answering the way we want.

### JESUS RAISES LAZARUS

Jesus had been preaching in the villages beyond the Jordan, probably in Perea, when he received the news of Lazarus's sickness. Jesus did not leave immediately, but waited two days before returning to Judea. He knew Lazarus would be dead when he arrived in Bethany, but he was going to do a great miracle.



But he will meet all our needs according to his perfect schedule and purpose. Patiently await his timing.

**11:9, 10** *Day* means the knowledge of God's will and reliance on his guidance; *night* means absence of this knowledge combined with self-reliance. When we move ahead in darkness, we are likely to stumble.

**11:14, 15** If Jesus had been with Lazarus during the final moments of his sickness, he might have healed him rather than let him die. But Lazarus died so that Jesus' power over death could be shown to his disciples and others. Jesus' delay was not for purposes of showmanship—to impress people. It was an essential display of his power and the resurrection from the dead is a major belief of Christian faith. He not only raised himself from the dead, but he has the power to raise others.

**11:16** We often remember Thomas as "the doubter," because he doubted Jesus' resurrection (20:25). But here he demonstrated love and courage. The disciples knew the dangers of going with Jesus to Jerusalem, and they tried to talk him out of it. Thomas merely expressed what all of them felt. When their objections failed, they were willing to go, even though it appeared they might have to die with him. They may not have understood why Jesus would die, but they were loyal. There are unknown dangers in doing God's work. It is wise to consider the high cost of being Jesus' disciple.

**11:25, 26** Jesus has power over life and death as well as power to forgive sins. This is because he is the Creator of life (see 14:6). He who *is* life can surely restore life. Whoever believes in him has a spiritual life that death cannot touch or diminish in any way. When we realize his power and how wonderful his offer to us really is, how can we help but commit our lives to him? To those of us who believe, what wonderful assurance and certainty we have: "Because I live, ye shall live also" (14:19).

11:27  
Matt 16:16  
John 6:14

<sup>27</sup>She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world. <sup>28</sup>And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. <sup>29</sup>As soon as she heard *that*, she arose quickly, and came unto him.

<sup>30</sup>Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him.

<sup>31</sup>The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there. <sup>32</sup>Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

<sup>33</sup>When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, <sup>34</sup>and said, **Where have ye laid him?**

They said unto him, Lord, come and see. <sup>35</sup>Jesus wept. <sup>36</sup>Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! <sup>37</sup>And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?

11:27 *which should*: who was to. 11:28 *Master is come*: Teacher is here. 11:31 *hastily*: quickly. 11:33 *groaned in the spirit*: was deeply moved.

11:35  
Luke 19:41  
11:37  
John 9:6-7



# LAZARUS

The details surrounding death may vary, but the reality is universal. Scenes like Lazarus's funeral in Bethany are repeated many times around the world each day. A grieving family gathers at a graveside. Friends agonize over what to say. Their helpless silence, downcast eyes, and shuffling feet provide more distraction than comfort. When death is unexpected, the whys hang in the air like choking smog.

Drawn by grief and duty, people came from Jerusalem and the surrounding area to pay their last respects to a citizen of Bethany. Jesus' friend Lazarus was dead. His brief sickness proved stronger than any available medicine. Jesus had been sent for, but had failed to arrive in time. Death didn't wait. Following the wisdom of hot countries, the body was soon wrapped and buried. Four days later, Jesus arrived.

Lazarus's sisters Mary and Martha reacted in shock. Grief-stricken, they struggled to understand why Jesus had delayed in coming. We have no idea how Lazarus reacted to his own death. In fact, we don't have a record of a single word he said. We do know that he listened to Jesus. Even when the curtain of death was between them, Lazarus responded to Jesus' voice. He came hobbling out of his cave-tomb, still wrapped in the graveclothes. Jesus raised him from the dead!

When all is said and done, only what God accomplished through us will really matter. We will take little credit. Jesus worked in and around Lazarus just as he does with us. We have Christ's invitation to participate in his work, but we must not forget that he will do much more than we will know. Meanwhile, we delight in what Christ does with the little we have to offer him.

Lazarus's resurrection poses an important question: When you die, do you fully expect that your next conscious experience will be hearing the voice of Jesus call you by name?

#### Strengths and accomplishments:

- Regularly hosted Jesus in his home
- Raised from the dead by Jesus after four days in the grave

#### Lessons from his life:

- Once we have given God ownership of our lives, we can't predict what he will do with them
- Jesus' circle of relationships went beyond the 12 disciples
- Jesus declared that the events surrounding Lazarus's sickness and death would glorify God

#### Vital statistics:

- Where: Bethany
- Relatives: Sisters: Mary and Martha

#### Key verse:

"When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby" (John 11:4).

Lazarus's role as an "active spectator" is recorded in John 11:1—12:11.

**11:27** Martha is best known for being too busy to sit down and talk with Jesus (Luke 10:38–42). But here we see her as a woman of deep faith. Her statement of faith is exactly the response Jesus desires from us.

**11:33–37** John stresses that we have a God who cares. When Jesus saw the weeping and wailing, he too wept openly. Perhaps he empathized with their grief, or perhaps he was troubled at their unbelief. In either case, Jesus showed that he cares enough for us to weep with us in our sorrow. This contrasts with the Greek concept of God that was popular in his day—a God with no

emotions and no messy involvement with humans. Here we see many of Jesus' emotions—compassion, indignation, sorrow, even frustration. He often expressed deep emotion, and we must never be afraid to reveal our true feelings to him. He understands them, for he experienced them. Be honest, and don't try to hide anything from your Savior. He cares.

**Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead (167)**

<sup>38</sup>Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. <sup>39</sup>Jesus said, **Take ye away the stone.**

Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been *dead* four days.

<sup>40</sup>Jesus saith unto her, **Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?** <sup>41</sup>Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up *his* eyes, and said, **Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.** <sup>42</sup>**And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.** <sup>43</sup>And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, **Lazarus, come forth.** <sup>44</sup>And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, **Loose him, and let him go.**

**11:39**  
John 11:17

**11:41**  
Matt 11:25

**11:42**  
John 12:30

**11:43**  
Luke 7:14

**Religious leaders plot to kill Jesus (168)**

<sup>45</sup>Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. <sup>46</sup>But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done. <sup>47</sup>Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. <sup>48</sup>If we let him thus alone, all *men* will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.

<sup>49</sup>And one of them, *named* Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, <sup>50</sup>nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

<sup>51</sup>And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; <sup>52</sup>and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

<sup>53</sup>Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death. <sup>54</sup>Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.

<sup>55</sup>And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves. <sup>56</sup>Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast? <sup>57</sup>Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should shew it, that they might take him.

**11:47**  
Matt 26:3-5

**11:49**  
Matt 26:3

**11:50**  
John 18:13-14

**11:51**  
Exod 28:30  
Num 27:21

**11:52**  
Isa 49:6  
John 10:16  
1 Jn 2:2

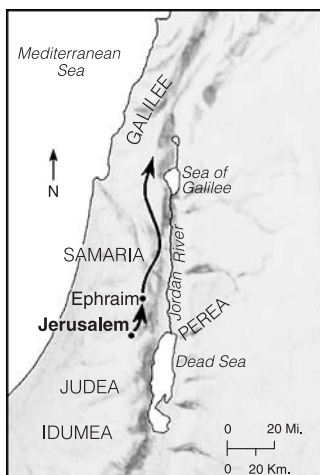
**11:53**  
Matt 26:4

**11:55**  
Exod 12:13  
2 Chr 30:17-19  
Matt 26:1-2  
Mark 14:1

**11:39** *he stinketh*: there will be a stench. **11:43** *come forth*: come out. **11:44** *napkin*: cloth. *loose*: unbind. **11:50** *consider*: realize. *expedient*: better. **11:53** *took counsel together*: plotted. **11:54** *thence*: from there. *continued*: stayed. **11:55** *nigh*: near. *purify*: ceremonially cleanse. **11:56** *sought they*: they were seeking for. **11:57** *a commandment*: orders. *shew*: report. *take*: seize.

**TIME WITH THE DISCIPLES**

Lazarus's return to life became the last straw for the religious leaders who were bent on killing Jesus. So Jesus stopped his public ministry and took his disciples away from Jerusalem to Ephraim. From there they returned to Galilee for a while (see the map in Luke 17, p. 1513).



**11:38** Tombs at this time were usually caves in the limestone rock of a hillside. A tomb was often large enough for people to walk inside. Several bodies were usually placed in one tomb. After burial, a large stone was rolled across the entrance to the tomb.

**11:44** Jesus raised others from the dead, including Jairus's daughter (Matthew 9:18–26; Mark 5:41, 42; Luke 8:40–56) and a widow's son (Luke 7:11–15).

**11:45–53** Even when confronted point-blank with the power of Jesus' deity, some refused to believe. These eyewitnesses not only rejected him; they plotted his murder. They were so hardened that they preferred to reject God's Son rather than admit they were wrong. They preferred "closure" instead of being open to God's marvelous power. Beware of pride. If we allow it to grow, it can lead us into enormous sin.

**11:48** The Jewish leaders knew if they didn't stop Jesus, the Romans would lash out against all of them. Rome gave partial freedom to the Jews as long as they were quiet and obedient. Jesus' miracles often caused a disturbance. The leaders feared that Rome's displeasure would bring additional hardship to their nation.

**11:51** John regarded Caiaphas's statement as a prophecy. As High Priest, Caiaphas was used by God to explain Jesus' death even though Caiaphas didn't realize what he was doing.

12:1-8  
 /Matt 26:6-13  
 /Mark 14:3-9

12:1  
 John 11:1

12:2  
 Luke 10:38-42

12:3  
 Luke 7:37-38

12:4  
 John 6:71

*A woman anoints Jesus with expensive perfume*

(182/Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9)

**12** Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. <sup>2</sup> There they made him a supper; and Martha served; but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. <sup>3</sup> Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

<sup>4</sup> Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him,

12:3 ointment: perfume. anointed: poured it on. odour: fragrance.



CAIAPHAS

Caiaphas was the leader of the religious group called the Sadducees. Educated and wealthy, they were the politically influential in the nation. As the elite group, they were on fairly good terms with Rome. They hated Jesus because he endangered their secure life styles and taught a message they could not accept. A kingdom in which leaders *humbly served* had no appeal to them.

Caiaphas's usual policy was to remove any threats to his power by whatever means necessary. For Caiaphas, whether Jesus should die was not in question; the only point to be settled was *when* his death should take place. Not only did Jesus have to be captured and tried, the Jewish Council also needed Roman approval before they could carry out the death sentence. Caiaphas's plans were unexpectedly helped by Judas's offer to betray Christ.

Caiaphas did not realize that his schemes were actually part of a wonderful plan God was carrying out. Caiaphas's willingness to sacrifice another man to preserve his own security was decidedly selfish. By contrast, Jesus' willingness to die for us was a clear example of loving self-sacrifice. Caiaphas thought he had won the battle as Jesus hung on the cross, but he did not count on the resurrection!

Caiaphas's mind was closed. He couldn't accept the resurrection even when the evidence was overwhelming, and he attempted to silence those whose lives had been forever changed by the risen Christ (Matthew 28:12, 13). Caiaphas represents those people who will not believe because they think it will cost them too much to accept Jesus as Lord. They choose the fleeting power, prestige, and pleasures of this life instead of the eternal life God offers those who receive his Son. What is your choice?

**Strength and accomplishment:**

- High Priest for 18 years

**Weaknesses and mistakes:**

- One of those most directly responsible for Jesus' death
- Used his office as a means to power and personal security
- Planned Jesus' capture, carried out his illegal trial, pressured Pilate to approve the crucifixion, attempted to prevent the resurrection, and later tried to cover up the fact of the resurrection
- Kept up religious appearances while compromising with Rome
- Involved in the later persecution of Christians

**Lessons from his life:**

- God uses even the twisted motives and actions of his enemies to bring about his will
- When we cover selfish motives with spiritual objectives and words, God still sees our intentions

**Vital statistics:**

- Where: Jerusalem
- Occupation: High Priest
- Relatives: Father-in-law: Annas
- Contemporaries: Jesus, Pilate, Herod Antipas

**Key verses:**

"And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not" (John 11:49, 50).

Caiaphas is also mentioned in Matthew 26:3, 4, 57-67; Luke 3:2; John 11:49-53; John 18:13-28; and Acts 4:6.

**12:3** Spikenard was a fragrant ointment imported from the mountains of India. Thus it was very expensive. The amount Mary used was worth a year's wages. Spikenard was used to anoint kings; Mary may have been anointing Jesus as her Messiah-King.

**12:4-6** Judas often dipped into the disciples' funds for his own use. Jesus, of course, knew this, but apparently never did or said anything about it. Similarly, when we choose the

way of sin, God may not immediately do anything to stop us, but this does not mean he approves of our actions. What we deserve will come.



<sup>5</sup>Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? <sup>6</sup>This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

<sup>7</sup>Then said Jesus, **Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.** <sup>8</sup>**For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.**

<sup>9</sup>Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead. <sup>10</sup>But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; <sup>11</sup>because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

#### *Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey*

(183/Matthew 21:1–11; Mark 11:1–11; Luke 19:28–44)

<sup>12</sup>On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, <sup>13</sup>took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. <sup>14</sup>And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, <sup>15</sup>Fear not, daughter of Zion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt. <sup>16</sup>These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and *that* they had done these things unto him.

<sup>17</sup>The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record. <sup>18</sup>For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle. <sup>19</sup>The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him.

#### *Jesus explains why he must die (185)*

<sup>20</sup>And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: <sup>21</sup>the same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. <sup>22</sup>Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.

<sup>23</sup>And Jesus answered them, saying, **The hour is come, that the Son of man should be**

**12:5** pence: denarii. **12:6** bag: money bag. **bare:** helped himself from. **12:10** consulted: made plans. **12:11** went away: were leaving. **12:13** forth: out. **12:15** Zion: Zion. **12:17** bare record: were bearing witness. **12:18** cause: reason. **12:19** perceive ye: you see. **prevail:** are accomplishing. **12:21** desired: asked. **would:** wish to.

**12:6**  
John 13:29  
**12:7**  
John 19:40  
**12:8**  
Deut 15:11

**12:10**  
Luke 16:31

**12:12-19**  
//Matt 21:1-11  
//Mark 11:1-11  
//Luke 19:28-38

**12:13**  
Lev 23:40  
†Ps 118:25-26  
Zeph 3:15

**12:15**  
Isa 35:4  
†Zech 9:9

**12:16**  
John 2:22; 7:39

**12:17**  
John 11:43-44

**12:18**  
John 12:11; 19:37

**12:21**  
John 1:43-44

**12:23**  
John 13:32; 17:1

**12:5, 6** Judas used a pious phrase to hide his true motives. But Jesus knew what was in his heart. His life had become a lie and Satan was gaining more and more control over him (13:27). Satan is the father of lies and a lying character opens the door to his influence. Jesus' knowledge of us should make us want to keep our actions consistent with our words. Since we have nothing to fear with him, we should have nothing to hide.

**12:7, 8** This act and Jesus' response to it do not teach us to ignore the poor so we can spend money extravagantly for Christ. This was a unique act for a specific occasion—an anointing for Jesus' burial and a public declaration of faith in him as Messiah. Jesus' words should have taught Judas a valuable lesson about the worth of money. Unfortunately, Judas did not take heed; soon he would sell his Master's life for 30 pieces of silver.

**12:10, 11** The chief priests' blindness and hardness of heart caused them to sink even deeper into sin. They rejected the Messiah, planned to kill him, and now plotted to murder Lazarus also. One sin leads to another. From the Jewish leaders' point of view, they could accuse Jesus of blasphemy because he claimed equality with God. But Lazarus had done nothing of the kind. They wanted him dead simply because he was a living witness to Jesus' power. This is a warning to us to avoid sin. Sin leads to more sin, a downward spiral that can be stopped only by repentance, and the power of the Holy Spirit to change our behavior.

**12:13** Jesus began his last week on earth by riding into Jerusalem on a donkey under a canopy of palm branches with crowds hailing him as their king. To announce that he was indeed the Messiah, Jesus chose a *time* when all Israel would be gathered at Jerusalem, a *place* where huge crowds could see him, and a *way* of proclaiming his mission that was unmistakable. On Palm

Sunday we celebrate Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem as Lord of lords and King of peace.

**12:13** The people who were praising God for giving them a king had the wrong idea about Jesus. They were sure he would be a national leader who would restore their nation to its former glory, and thus they were deaf to the words of their prophets and blind to Jesus' real mission. When it became apparent that Jesus was not going to fulfill their hopes, many people turned against him.

**12:16** After Jesus' resurrection, the disciples understood for the first time many of the prophecies that they had missed along the way. Jesus' words and actions took on new meaning and made more sense. In retrospect, they saw how Jesus had led them into a deeper and better understanding of his truth. Stop now and think about the events in your life leading up to where you are now. How has God led you to this point? As you grow older, you will look back and see God's involvement more clearly than you do now. Let this truth encourage you to live faithfully today.

**12:18** The people flocked to Jesus because they had heard of his great miracle in raising Lazarus from the dead. Their adoration was short-lived and their commitment shallow, for in a few days they would do nothing to stop his crucifixion. Devotion based only on curiosity or popularity fades quickly.

**12:20, 21** These Greeks may have been converts to the Jewish faith. They probably went to Philip because, though he was a Jew, he had a Greek name.

**12:23–25** This is a beautiful picture of the necessary sacrifice of Jesus. Unless a grain of wheat is buried, it will not become a blade of wheat producing many more grains. Jesus had to die to pay the penalty for our sin, but also to show his power over death. His resurrection proves he has eternal life. Because he is God, he can give this same eternal life to all who believe in him.

**12:24**  
1 Cor 15:36  
**12:25**  
Matt 10:39  
Luke 9:24; 17:33

**12:27**  
Ps 6:3  
Matt 26:38  
Mark 14:34

**12:28**  
Matt 3:17; 17:5  
Mark 1:11; 9:7  
Luke 3:22; 9:35  
2 Pet 1:17-18

**12:31**  
John 14:30; 16:11  
Eph 2:2

**12:34**  
Pss 89:4, 36; 110:4  
Isa 9:7  
Ezek 37:25  
Dan 7:14

glorified. <sup>24</sup>Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. <sup>25</sup>He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. <sup>26</sup>If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will *my* Father honour. <sup>27</sup>Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. <sup>28</sup>Father, glorify thy name.

Then came there a voice from heaven, *saying*, I have both glorified *it*, and will glorify *it* again. <sup>29</sup>The people therefore, that stood by, and heard *it*, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.

<sup>30</sup>Jesus answered and said, **This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. <sup>31</sup>Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. <sup>32</sup>And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me. <sup>33</sup>This he said, signifying what death he should die.**

<sup>34</sup>The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?

**12:24** verily: truly. *corn*: grain. *abideth*: remains. **12:27** soul: heart. *cause*: reason. **12:34** *abideth*: will live.

**GREAT EXPECTATIONS**  
*Jesus Does the Unexpected*  
Wherever he went, Jesus exceeded people's expectations.

*What was expected*

A man looked for healing.

The disciples were expecting an ordinary day of fishing.

A widow was resigned to bury her dead son.

The religious leaders wanted a miracle.

A woman who wanted to be healed touched Jesus.

The disciples thought the crowd should be sent home because there was no food.

The crowds looked for a political leader to set up a new kingdom to overthrow Rome's control.

The disciples wanted to eat the Passover meal with Jesus, their Master.

The religious leaders wanted Jesus killed and got their wish.

*What Jesus did*

Jesus also forgave his sins.

They found the Savior.

Jesus restored her son to life.

Jesus offered them the Creator of miracles.

Jesus helped her see it was her faith that had healed her.

Jesus used a small meal to feed thousands, and there were leftovers!

Jesus offered them an eternal, spiritual Kingdom to overthrow sin's control.

Jesus washed their feet, showing that he was also their servant.

But Jesus rose from the dead!

*Reference*

Mark 2:1–12

Luke 5:1–11

Luke 7:11–17

Matthew 12:38–45

Mark 5:25–34

John 6:1–15

A theme throughout the Gospels

John 13:1–20

John 11:53; 19:30; 20:1–29

**12:25** We must be so committed to living for Christ that we should “hate” our lives by comparison. This does not mean that we long to die or are careless or destructive with the life God has given, but that we are willing to die if doing so will glorify Christ. We must disown the tyrannical rule of our own self-centeredness. By laying aside our striving for advantage, security, and pleasure, we can serve God lovingly and freely. Releasing control of our life and transferring control to Jesus brings eternal life and genuine joy in the present.

**12:26** Many believed that Jesus came for the Jews only. But when Jesus said, “If any man serve me, let him follow me,” he was talking to these Greeks. No matter who the sincere seekers are, Jesus welcomes them. His message is for everyone. Don’t allow social or racial differences to become barriers to the Gospel. Take the Word to all people.

**12:27** Jesus knew his crucifixion lay ahead and because he was human he dreaded it. He knew he would have to take the sins of the world on himself, and he knew this would separate him from his Father. He wanted to be delivered from this horrible death, but he knew that God sent him into the world to die for our sins, in our place. Jesus said no to his human desires in order to obey his Father and bring glory to him. Although we will never have to face

such a difficult task, we are still called to obedience. Whatever the Father asks, we should do his will and bring glory to his name.

**12:31** The prince of this world is Satan, an angel who rebelled against God. He is real, not symbolic, and is constantly working against God and those who obey him. He tempted Eve in the garden and persuaded her to sin; he tempted Jesus in the wilderness and did not persuade him to fall (Matthew 4:1–11). Satan has great power, but people can be delivered from his reign of spiritual darkness because of Christ's victory on the cross. Satan is powerful but Jesus is much more powerful. Jesus' resurrection shattered Satan's deathly power (Colossians 1:13, 14).

**12:32–34** The crowd could not believe the Messiah would die. They were waving palm branches for a victorious Messiah who they thought would set up a political, earthly kingdom that would never end. Jesus' words did not fit their concept of the Messiah. First he had to suffer and die—then he would one day set up his eternal Kingdom. For what kind of Messiah, or Savior, are you looking? Don't try to force Jesus into your own mold—he won't fit.

<sup>35</sup>Then Jesus said unto them, **Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.** <sup>36</sup>While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.

**12:35**  
John 8:12; 9:4;  
12:46

**12:36**  
John 8:59  
Eph 5:8  
1 Thes 5:5

**12:38**  
?Isa 53:1  
Rom 10:16

**12:40**  
?Isa 6:10  
Matt 13:14

**12:41**  
Isa 6:1

**12:42**  
John 7:13, 48;  
9:22-23; 12:11

**12:43**  
John 5:44

*Most of the people do not believe in Jesus (186)*

<sup>37</sup>But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him:

<sup>38</sup>that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? <sup>39</sup>Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, <sup>40</sup>He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with *their* eyes, nor understand with *their* heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. <sup>41</sup>These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him. <sup>42</sup>Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: <sup>43</sup>for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

*Jesus summarizes his message (187)*

<sup>44</sup>Jesus cried and said, **He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.** <sup>45</sup>And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me. <sup>46</sup>I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. <sup>47</sup>And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. <sup>48</sup>He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. <sup>49</sup>For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. <sup>50</sup>And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

**12:45**  
John 14:9

**12:46**  
John 1:4; 3:19;  
8:12; 9:5

**12:47**  
John 3:17; 8:15

**12:36** children: sons. **12:38** Esaias: Isaiah, report: message. **12:40** be converted: turn to me. **12:42** chief rulers: leaders. confess him: confess their faith. **12:44** cried: cried out. **12:46** am come: have come as. abide: stay.

**12:35, 36** Jesus said he would be with them in person for only a short time, and they should take advantage of his presence while they had it. Like a light in a dark place, he would show them where to go. If they walked in his light, they would become "children of light," revealing the truth and pointing people to God. As Christians, we are to be Christ's light bearers, letting his light shine through us. How brightly is your light shining?

**12:37, 38** Jesus had performed many miracles, but most people still didn't believe in him. Likewise, many today won't believe despite all God does. Don't be discouraged if your witness for Christ doesn't turn as many to him as you'd like. Your job is to continue as a faithful witness. You are responsible to reach out to others, but they are responsible for their own decisions.

**12:39-41** People in Jesus' time, like those in the time of Esaias (Isaiah), would not believe despite the evidence (12:37). As a result, God hardened their hearts. Does that mean God intentionally prevented these people from believing in him? No, he simply confirmed their own choices. After a lifetime of resisting God, they had become so set in their ways that they wouldn't even try to understand Jesus' message. For such people, it is virtually impossible to come to God—their hearts have been permanently hardened. Other instances of hardened hearts are recorded in Exodus 9:12; Romans 1:24-28; and 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12.

**12:42, 43** Along with those who refused to believe, many believed but refused to admit it. This is just as bad, and Jesus

had strong words for such people (see Matthew 10:32, 33). People who do this are afraid of rejection or ridicule. Many Jewish leaders wouldn't admit to faith in Jesus because they feared excommunication from the synagogue (which was their livelihood) and loss of their prestigious place in the community. But the praise of others is fickle and short-lived. We should be concerned much more about God's eternal acceptance than the temporary approval of other people.

**12:45** We often wonder what God is like. How can we know the Creator when he doesn't make himself visible? Jesus said plainly that those who see him see God, because he *is* God. If you want to know what God is like, study the person and words of Jesus Christ.

**12:48** The purpose of Jesus' first mission on earth was not to judge people, but to show them the way to find salvation and eternal life. When he comes again, one of his main purposes will be to judge people for how they lived on earth. On the day of judgment, those who accepted Jesus and lived his way will be raised to eternal life (1 Corinthians 15:51-57; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18; Revelation 21:1-6), and those who rejected Jesus and lived any way they pleased will face eternal punishment (Revelation 20:11-15). Decide now which side you'll be on, for the consequences of your decision will last forever.

**13:1ff** Chapters 13—17 tell us what Jesus said to his disciples the night before his death. These words were all spoken in one evening when, with only the disciples as his audience, he gave final instructions to prepare them for his death and resurrection, events that would change their lives forever.

**13:1** Jesus knew he would be betrayed by one of his disciples, denied by another, and deserted by all of them for a time. Still "he loved them unto the end." God knows us completely, as Jesus knew his disciples. He knows the sins we have committed and the ones we will yet commit. Still, he loves us. How do you respond to that kind of love?

**C. DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS, THE SON OF GOD (13:1—21:25)**

John begins his Gospel with eternity and ends with Jesus coming to earth again. He features Jesus teaching his disciples privately just before his arrest and death. We see, clearly, the deep love Jesus has for the believer, and the peace that comes from faith. Knowing the love Jesus has for believers, we too should believe and allow Jesus to forgive our sins. Only then will we experience peace in a world filled with turmoil.

**1. Jesus teaches his disciples**

Jesus washes the disciples' feet (210)

**13:1**  
John 16:28; 17:1  
**13:2**  
Luke 22:3  
John 6:70-71  
**13:4**  
Luke 12:37; 22:27

**13** Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. <sup>2</sup>And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him; <sup>3</sup>Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; <sup>4</sup>he

**13:1** hour: time.



JOHN

Being loved is the most powerful motivation in the world! Our ability to love is often shaped by our experience of love. We usually love others as we have been loved.

Some of the greatest statements about God's loving nature were written by a man who experienced God's love in a unique way. John, Jesus' disciple, expressed his relationship to the Son of God by calling himself "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 21:20). Although Jesus' love is clearly communicated in all the Gospels, in John's Gospel it is a central theme. Because his own experience of Jesus' love was so strong and personal, John was sensitive to those words and actions of Jesus that illustrated how the one who *is* love loved others.

Jesus knew John fully and loved him fully. He gave John and his brother James the nickname "sons of thunder" (Mark 3:17), perhaps from an occasion when the brothers asked Jesus for permission to "command fire to come down from heaven" (Luke 9:54) on a village that had refused to welcome Jesus and the disciples. In John's Gospel and letters, we see the great God of love, while the thunder of God's justice bursts from the pages of Revelation.

Jesus confronts each of us as he confronted John. We cannot know the depth of Jesus' love unless we are willing to face the fact that he knows us completely. Otherwise we are fooled into believing he must love the people we pretend to be, not the sinners we actually are. John and all the disciples convince us that God is able and willing to accept us as we are. Being aware of God's love is a great motivator for change. His love is not given in exchange for our efforts; his love frees us to really live. Have you accepted that love?

**Strengths and accomplishments:**

- Before following Jesus, was one of John the Baptist's disciples
- One of the 12 disciples and, with Peter and James, one of the inner three, closest to Jesus
- Wrote five New Testament books: the Gospel of John; 1, 2, and 3 John; and Revelation

**Weaknesses and mistakes:**

- Along with James, shared a tendency to outbursts of selfishness and anger
- Asked for a special position in Jesus' Kingdom

**Lessons from his life:**

- Those who realize how much they are loved are able to love much
- When God changes a life, he does not take away personality characteristics, but puts them to effective use in his service

**Vital statistics:**

- Occupation: Fisherman, disciple
- Relatives: Father: Zebedee. Mother: Salome. Brother: James.
- Contemporaries: Jesus, Pilate, Herod

**Key verses:**

"Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth" (1 John 2:7, 8).

John's story is told throughout the Gospels, Acts, and Revelation.

**13:1–13** For more information on Judas Iscariot, see his Profile in Mark 14, p. 1449.

**13:1–17** Jesus was the model servant, and he showed this attitude to his disciples. Washing guests' feet was a job for a household servant when guests arrived. But Jesus wrapped a towel around him, as the lowliest slave would do, and washed his disciples' feet.

If God in the flesh is willing to serve, we his followers must also be servants, willing to serve in any way that glorifies God. Are you willing to follow Christ's example? Whom can you serve today?

There is a special blessing for those who not only agree that humble service is Christ's way, but who also do it (13:17).

riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. <sup>5</sup>After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel wherewith he was girded.

<sup>6</sup>Then cometh he to Simon Peter, and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

<sup>7</sup>Jesus answered and said unto him, **What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.**

<sup>8</sup>Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet.

Jesus answered him, **If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.**

<sup>9</sup>Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands and *my* head.

<sup>10</sup>Jesus saith to him, **He that is washed needeth not save to wash *his* feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.** <sup>11</sup>For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, **Ye are not all clean.** <sup>12</sup>So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, **Know ye what I have done to you?** <sup>13</sup>**Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.** <sup>14</sup>**If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.** <sup>15</sup>For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. <sup>16</sup>Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. <sup>17</sup>If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

<sup>18</sup>I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, **He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.** <sup>19</sup>Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am *he*. <sup>20</sup>Verily, verily, I say unto you, **He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.**

#### *Jesus and the disciples have the Last Supper*

(211/Matthew 26:20–29; Mark 14:17–26; Luke 22:14–30)

<sup>21</sup>When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, **Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.**

<sup>22</sup>Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. <sup>23</sup>Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. <sup>24</sup>Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. <sup>25</sup>He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?

<sup>26</sup>Jesus answered, **He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it.** And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, *the son of Simon.* <sup>27</sup>And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, **That thou doest, do quickly.** <sup>28</sup>Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. <sup>29</sup>For some of *them* thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, **Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor.** <sup>30</sup>He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.

**13:4** *laid aside his*: took off his. *girded himself*: wrapped it around his waist. **13:6** *dost thou*: are you going to. **13:7** *hereafter*: later. **13:10** *save*: except. *every whit*: all over. **13:11** *should*: was going to. **13:12** *taken his*: put on his outer. *set down*: seated. **13:13** *Master*: Teacher. *ye say well*: you are right. **13:16** *verily*: truly. **13:19** *come*: happens. **13:22** *one on another*: at one another. *doubting*: uncertain. **13:23** *leaning on*: reclining next to. *bosom*: side. **13:24** *beckoned*: motioned. **13:26** *a sop*: this piece of bread. **13:29** *bag*: money bag. *against*: for.

**13:5**  
Luke 7:44  
John 12:3

**13:8**  
Ezek 36:25  
1 Cor 6:11  
Eph 5:26  
Titus 3:5

**13:10**  
John 15:3

**13:11**  
John 6:64, 70-71;  
13:2

**13:13**  
1 Cor 12:3

**13:14**  
Luke 22:27  
1 Tim 5:10  
1 Pet 5:5

**13:15**  
Phil 2:5-7  
1 Pet 5:3-5  
1 Jn 2:6; 3:16

**13:17**  
Jas 1:25

**13:18**  
Ps 41:9

**13:20**  
Matt 10:40  
Luke 10:16

**13:21-30**  
Matt 26:21-25  
Mark 14:18-21  
Luke 22:21-23

**13:23**  
John 19:26

**13:25**  
John 21:20

**13:27**  
Luke 22:3  
John 13:2

**13:29**  
John 12:6

**13:30**  
Luke 22:53

**13:6, 7** Seeing his Master behave like a slave must have confused Peter. He still did not understand Jesus' teaching that to be a leader, one must be a servant. This is not a comfortable passage for leaders who find it hard to serve those under them. How do you treat those who work under you?

**13:8, 9** When Jesus responded: "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me," he may have meant (1) that unless he washed away Peter's sins by his death on the cross, then Peter could have no relationship with him, or (2) that unless Peter submitted to him and allowed Jesus to minister in this way, Peter would never learn the lesson of humility. Either way, Peter seemed to grasp the significance of Jesus' words, for he then wanted to be bathed completely: "Not my feet only, but also my hands and my head."

**13:12ff** Jesus did not wash his disciples' feet just to get them to be nice to each other. His far greater goal was to extend his mission on earth after he was gone. These men were to move into the world serving God, serving each other, and serving all people to whom they took the message of salvation.

**13:26** The honored guest at a meal was often singled out in this way.

**13:27** Satan's part in the betrayal of Jesus does not remove any of the responsibility from Judas. Disillusioned because Jesus was talking about dying rather than setting up his Kingdom, Judas may have been trying to force his hand and make him use his power to prove he was the Messiah. Or perhaps Judas, not understanding Jesus' mission, no longer believed he was God's chosen one. Whatever Judas thought, Satan assumed that Jesus' death would end his mission and thwart God's plan. He did not know Jesus' death was the most important part of God's plan all along.

**13:27–38** We can see that Jesus knew exactly what was going to happen. He knew about Judas and about Peter, but he did not change the situation, nor did he stop loving them. In the same way, Jesus knows exactly what you will do to hurt him. Yet he still loves you unconditionally and will forgive you whenever you ask for it. Judas couldn't understand this, and his life ended tragically.



**13:31-32**  
John 12:23; 17:1, 5

**13:33**  
John 7:33-34; 8:21

**13:34**  
Lev 19:18  
Eph 5:2  
1 Thes 4:9  
1 Pet 1:22  
1 Jn 2:8; 3:23;  
4:10-11

**13:35**  
1 Jn 3:14; 4:20

**13:36-38**  
/Matt 26:33-35  
/Mark 14:29-31  
/Luke 22:33-34

**13:36**  
John 21:18  
2 Pet 1:14

**14:2**  
Ps 90:1  
John 2:16, 19-21;  
14:6

**14:3**  
John 14:10-11,  
18-20; 16:16-22;  
17:21-24

**14:6**  
John 1:4, 14, 16;  
8:32; 10:10; 11:25  
Rom 5:2  
Eph 2:18  
Heb 10:20  
1 Jn 5:20

**14:7**  
John 6:46; 8:19  
1 Jn 2:13

**14:9**  
John 1:14, 18;  
12:45  
2 Cor 4:4  
Col 1:15  
Heb 1:3

### Jesus predicts Peter's denial (212/Luke 22:31-38)

<sup>31</sup>Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, **Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.** <sup>32</sup>If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him. <sup>33</sup>Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you. <sup>34</sup>A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. <sup>35</sup>By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

<sup>36</sup>Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou?

Jesus answered him, **Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards.**

<sup>37</sup>Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.

<sup>38</sup>Jesus answered him, **Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.**

### Jesus is the way to the Father (213)

**14** Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. <sup>2</sup>In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup>And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. <sup>4</sup>And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

<sup>5</sup>Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?

<sup>6</sup>Jesus saith unto him, **I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.** <sup>7</sup>If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

<sup>8</sup>Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

<sup>9</sup>Jesus saith unto him, **Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? <sup>10</sup>Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.**

**13:32** straightway: at once. **13:35** one to another: for one another. **13:36** whither goest thou: where are you going. **14:2** mansions: rooms. **14:3** receive: take. **14:4** whither: where. **14:8** sufficeth: will satisfy. **14:9** so: such a.

Peter understood, and despite his shortcomings, his life ended triumphantly because he never let go of his faith.

**13:34** To love others was not a new commandment (see Leviticus 19:18), but to love others as much as Christ loved others was revolutionary. Now we are to love others based on Jesus' sacrificial love for us. Such love will not only bring unbelievers to Christ, it will also keep believers strong and united in a world hostile to God. Jesus was a living example of God's love, as we are to be living examples of Jesus' love.

**13:34, 35** Jesus says that our Christlike love will show we are his disciples. Do people see petty bickering, jealousy, and division in your church? Or do they know you are Jesus' followers by your love for one another?

Love is more than simply warm feelings; it is an attitude that reveals itself in action. How can we love others as Jesus loves us? By helping when it's not convenient, by giving when it hurts, by devoting energy to others' welfare rather than our own, by absorbing hurts from others without complaining or fighting back. This kind of loving is hard to do. That is why people notice when you do it and know you are empowered by a supernatural source. The Bible has another beautiful description of love in 1 Corinthians 13.

**13:37, 38** Peter proudly told Jesus that he was ready to die for him. But Jesus corrected him. He knew Peter would deny him that very night to protect himself (18:25-27). In our enthusiasm, it is easy to make promises, but God knows the extent of our commitment. Paul tells us not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought (Romans 12:3). Instead of bragging, show your commitment step by step as you grow in your knowledge of God's Word and in your faith.

**14:1-3** Jesus' words show that the way to eternal life, though

unseen, is certain—as assured as your trust in Jesus. He has already prepared the way to eternal life. The only issue that may still be unsettled is your willingness to believe.

**14:2, 3** There are few verses in Scripture that describe eternal life, but they are rich with promises. Here Jesus says, "I go to prepare a place for you," and "I will come again." We can look forward to eternal life because Jesus has promised it to all who believe in him. Although the details of eternity are unknown, we need not fear, because Jesus is preparing for us and will spend eternity with us.

**14:5, 6** This is one of the most basic and important passages in Scripture. How can we know the way to God? Only through Jesus. Jesus is the way because he is both God and man. By uniting our lives with his, we are united with God. Trust Jesus to take you to the Father, and all the benefits of being God's child will be yours.

**14:6** Jesus says he is the *only* way to God the Father. Some people may argue that this is too narrow. In reality, it is wide enough for the whole world, if the world chooses to accept it. Instead of worrying about how limited it sounds to have only one way, we should be saying, "Thank you, God, for providing a sure way to get to you!"

**14:6** As the *way*, Jesus is our path to the Father. As the *truth*, he is the reality of all God's promises. As the *life*, he joins his divine life to ours, both now and eternally. Jesus is, in truth, the only living way to the Father.

**14:9** Jesus is the visible, tangible image of the invisible God. He is the complete revelation of what God is like. Jesus explained to Philip, who wanted to see the Father, that to know Jesus is to know God. The search for God, for truth and reality, ends in Christ. (See also Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:1-4.)

<sup>11</sup> Believe me that I *am* in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. <sup>12</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater *works* than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. <sup>13</sup> And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup> If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

### Jesus promises the Holy Spirit (214)

<sup>15</sup> If ye love me, keep my commandments. <sup>16</sup> And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; <sup>17</sup> *even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. <sup>18</sup> I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. <sup>19</sup> Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. <sup>20</sup> At that day ye shall know that I *am* in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. <sup>21</sup> He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

<sup>22</sup> Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

<sup>23</sup> Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. <sup>24</sup> He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. <sup>25</sup> These things have I spoken unto you, being *yet* present with you. <sup>26</sup> But the Comforter, *which* is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

**14:12** *verily*: truly. **14:16** *abide*: stay. **14:18** *comfortless*: alone. **14:21** *keepeth*: obeys. *manifest*: reveal. **14:23** *abode*: home.

**14:16**  
John 14:26; 15:26

**14:17**  
Rom 8:15-16  
1 Jn 3:24

**14:18**  
Rom 8:9-11  
2 Cor 3:17-18

**14:20**  
John 10:38; 15:4-5;  
16:16, 23; 17:21-24

**14:21**  
John 15:10; 16:27  
1 Jn 2:5  
2 Jn 1:6

**14:22**  
Luke 6:16  
Acts 10:41

**14:23**  
Prov 8:17  
Ps 91:1  
John 15:10  
Eph 3:17  
1 Jn 4:16; 5:3  
Rev 3:20; 21:3

**14:24**  
John 7:16; 14:10

**14:26**  
John 1:33; 15:26;  
16:7; 20:22  
1 Jn 2:20, 27

**14:12, 13** Jesus is not saying that his disciples would do more amazing miracles—after all, raising the dead is about as amazing as you can get. Rather, the disciples, working in the power of the Holy Spirit, would carry the Gospel of God's Kingdom out of Palestine and into the whole world.

**14:14** When Jesus says we can ask for anything, we must remember that our asking must be in his name—that is, according to God's character and will. God will not grant requests contrary to his nature or his will, and we cannot use his name as a magic formula to fulfill our selfish desires. If we are sincerely following God and seeking to do his will, then our requests will be in line with what he wants, and he will grant them. (See also 15:16; 16:23).

**14:15, 16** Jesus was soon going to leave the disciples, but he would remain with them. How could this be? The Comforter—the Spirit of God himself—would come after Jesus was gone to care for and guide the disciples. This happened to the disciples just before his ascension (20:22), and to all the believers at Pentecost (Acts 2), shortly after Jesus ascended into heaven. The Holy Spirit is the very presence of God within us and all believers, helping us live as God wants and building Christ's church on earth. By faith we can appropriate his power each day.

**14:16** The word translated *Comforter* combines the ideas of comfort and counsel. The word could also be translated Advocate, Encourager, or Counselor. The Holy Spirit is a powerful person on our side, working for and with us.

**14:17ff** The following chapters teach these truths about the Holy Spirit: He will never leave us (14:16); the world at large cannot recognize him (14:17); he lives with us and in us (14:17); he teaches us (14:26); he reminds us of Jesus' words (14:26; 15:26); he convines us of sin, shows us God's righteousness, and announces God's judgment on evil (16:8); he guides us into truth and gives insight into future events (16:13); he glorifies Christ (16:14). The Holy Spirit has been active among people from the beginning of time, but after Pentecost (Acts 2), he came to live in all believers. Many people are unaware of the Holy

Spirit's activities, but to those who receive Christ's words and understand the Spirit's power, the Spirit gives a whole new way to look at life.

**14:18** When Jesus said, "I will come to you," he meant it. Although Jesus ascended to heaven, he sent the Holy Spirit to live in believers, and to have the Holy Spirit is to have Jesus himself.

**14:19–21** Sometimes people wish they knew the future so they could prepare for it. God has chosen not to give us this knowledge. He alone knows what will happen, but he tells us all we need to know to *prepare* for the future. When we live by his standards, he will not leave us, he will come to us, he will be within us, and he will show himself to us. God knows what will happen and because he will be with us through it, we need not fear. We don't have to know the future to have faith in God; we have to have faith in God to be secure about the future.

**14:21** Jesus said that his followers show their love by obeying him. Love is more than lovely words; it is commitment and conduct. If you love Christ, then prove it by obeying what he says in his Word.

**14:22, 23** Because the disciples were still expecting Jesus to establish an earthly kingdom and overthrow Rome, they found it hard to understand why he did not tell the world at large that he was the Messiah. Not everyone, however, could understand his message. Ever since Pentecost, the Gospel of the Kingdom has been proclaimed in the whole world, and yet not everyone is receptive to it. Jesus saves the deepest revelations of himself for those who love and obey him.

**14:26** Jesus promised the disciples that the Holy Spirit would help them remember what he had been teaching them. This promise ensures the validity of the New Testament. The disciples were eyewitnesses of Jesus' life and teachings, and the Holy Spirit helped them remember without taking away their individual perspective. We can be confident that the Gospels are accurate records of what Jesus taught and did (see 1 Corinthians 2:10–14). The Holy Spirit can help us in the same way. As we study the Bible, we can trust him to plant truth in our mind, convince us of God's will, and remind us when we stray from it.

**14:27**  
John 16:33; 20:19  
Phil 4:7  
Col 3:15

**14:29**  
John 13:19

**14:30**  
John 12:31

**14:31**  
John 10:18; 12:49

<sup>27</sup>Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. <sup>28</sup>Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come *again* unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I. <sup>29</sup>And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.

<sup>30</sup>Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. <sup>31</sup>But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

### Jesus teaches about the Vine and the branches (215)

**15** I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. <sup>2</sup>Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. <sup>3</sup>Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. <sup>4</sup>Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

<sup>5</sup>I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. <sup>6</sup>If a man *abide* not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned. <sup>7</sup>If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall *ask* what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. <sup>8</sup>Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

<sup>9</sup>As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. <sup>10</sup>If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. <sup>11</sup>These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in

**15:1**  
Ps 80:8-11  
Isa 5:1-7

**15:3**  
John 17:17  
Eph 5:26

**15:4**  
John 6:56

**15:6**  
Matt 3:10; 7:19;  
13:42

**15:8**  
Matt 5:16

**15:9**  
John 3:35

**15:10**  
John 14:15

**15:11**  
John 17:13  
1 Jn 1:4

**14:30** *hath nothing in:* has no power over. **14:31** *hence:* from here. **15:1** *husbandman:* gardener. **15:2** *purgeth:* prunes. **15:4** *abide:* remain. **15:6** *cast forth:* thrown out. **15:8** *herein:* by this. **15:9** *continue ye:* remain.

**14:27** The end result of the Holy Spirit's work in our lives is deep and lasting peace. Unlike worldly peace, which is usually defined as the absence of conflict, this peace is confident assurance in any circumstance; with Christ's peace, we have no need to fear the present or the future. Sin, fear, uncertainty, doubt, and numerous other forces are at war within us. The peace of God moves into our hearts and lives to restrain these hostile forces and offer comfort in place of conflict. Jesus says he will give us that peace if we are willing to accept it from him. If your life is full of stress, allow the Holy Spirit to fill you with Christ's peace (see Philippians 4:6, 7 for more on experiencing God's peace).

**14:28** As God the Son, Jesus willingly submits to God the Father. On earth, Jesus also submitted to many of the physical limitations of his humanity (Philippians 2:6).

**14:30, 31** Although Satan, the prince of this world, was unable to overpower Jesus (Matthew 4), he still had the arrogance to try. Satan's power exists only because God allows him to act. But because Jesus is sinless, Satan has no power over him. If we obey Jesus and align ourselves closely with God's purposes, Satan can have no power over us.

**14:31** "Arise, let us go hence" suggests that chapters 15—17 may have been spoken en route to the Garden of Gethsemane. Another view is that Jesus was asking the disciples to get ready to leave the Upper Room, but they did not actually do so until 18:1.

**15:1** The grapevine is a prolific plant; a single vine supports numerous branches and bears many grapes. In the Old Testament, grapes symbolized Israel's fruitfulness in doing God's work on the earth (Psalm 80:8; Isaiah 5:1-7; Ezekiel 19:10-14). In the Passover meal, the fruit of the vine symbolized God's goodness to his people.

**15:1ff** Christ is the vine, and God is the husbandman who cares for the branches to make them fruitful. The branches are all who claim to be followers of Christ. The fruitful branches are true believers who by their living union with Christ produce much fruit. But those who become unproductive—those who turn back from following Christ after making a superficial commitment—will be separated from the vine. Unproductive followers are as good as dead and will be cut off and cast aside.

**15:2, 3** Jesus makes a distinction between two kinds of pruning:

(1) cutting off and (2) cutting back branches. Fruitful branches are cut back to promote growth. In other words, God must sometimes discipline us to strengthen our character and faith. But branches that don't bear fruit are cut off at the trunk, because not only are they worthless, they often infect the rest of the tree. Those who won't bear fruit for God or who try to block the efforts of God's followers will be cut off from the divine flow of life.

**15:5** Fruit is not limited to soul-winning. In this chapter, answered prayer, joy, and love are mentioned as fruit (15:7, 11, 12). Galatians 5:22-24 and 2 Peter 1:5-8 describe additional fruit: qualities of the Christian character.

**15:5, 6** Abiding in Christ means (1) believing he is God's Son (1 John 4:15), (2) receiving him as Savior and Lord (John 1:12), (3) doing what God says (1 John 3:24), (4) continuing in faith (1 John 2:24), and (5) relating in love to the community of believers, Christ's body (John 15:12).

**15:5-8** Many people try to do good, be honest, and do what is right. But Jesus says the only way to live a truly good life is to stay close to him, like a branch attached to the vine. Apart from him our efforts are unfruitful. Are you receiving the nourishment and life offered by Christ, the vine? If not, you are missing a special gift he has for you.

**15:8** When a vine bears "much fruit," God is glorified, for daily he sent the sunshine and rain to make the crops grow, and constantly he nurtured each tiny plant and prepared it to blossom. What a moment of glory for the Lord of the harvest when the harvest is brought into the barns, mature and ready for use! He made it all happen! This farming analogy shows how God is glorified when people come into a right relationship with him and begin to "bear much fruit" in their lives.

**15:11** When things are going well, we feel elated. When hardships come, we sink into depression. But true joy transcends these waves of circumstance. Joy comes from a consistent relationship with Jesus Christ. When our lives are intertwined with his, he will help us walk through adversity without sinking into debilitating lows and manage prosperity without moving into deceptive highs. The joy of living with Jesus Christ daily keeps us levelheaded no matter how high or low our circumstances.

you, and *that* your joy might be full. <sup>12</sup>This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup>Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. <sup>14</sup>Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. <sup>15</sup>Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. <sup>16</sup>Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. <sup>17</sup>These things I command you, that ye love one another.

#### *Jesus warns about the world's hatred (216)*

<sup>18</sup>If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before *it hated* you. <sup>19</sup>If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. <sup>20</sup>Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. <sup>21</sup>But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. <sup>22</sup>If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin. <sup>23</sup>He that hateth me hateth my Father also. <sup>24</sup>If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. <sup>25</sup>But *this cometh to pass*, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.

<sup>26</sup>But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: <sup>27</sup>and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

**16** These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. <sup>2</sup>They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. <sup>3</sup>And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. <sup>4</sup>But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.

#### *Jesus teaches about the Holy Spirit (217)*

<sup>5</sup>But now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? <sup>6</sup>But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. <sup>7</sup>Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter

**15:15** *lord doeth*: master is doing. **15:16** *ordained*: appointed. **15:19** *his own*: you as its own. **15:20** *kept my saying*: obeyed my message. **15:22** *cloak*: excuse. **15:25** *a cause*: reason. **16:1** *be offended*: fall away. **16:5** *whither*: where. **16:7** *expedient*: better.

**15:12**  
John 13:34  
**15:13**  
John 10:11  
Rom 5:6-8  
**15:16**  
Rom 1:13  
Phil 1:22

**15:18**  
John 7:7  
1 Jn 3:13

**15:19**  
John 17:14  
1 Jn 4:5

**15:21**  
Matt 5:11  
1 Pet 4:14

**15:22**  
John 9:41

**15:24**  
John 5:36; 9:41

**15:25**  
?Pss 35:19; 69:4

**15:26**  
John 14:17  
1 Jn 5:7

**15:27**  
John 21:24  
1 Jn 1:2; 4:14

**16:2**  
John 9:22

**16:3**  
John 15:21

**16:4**  
John 13:19

**16:5**  
John 7:33; 13:36

**16:7**  
John 14:26; 15:26

**15:12, 13** We are to love one another as Jesus loved us, and he loved us enough to give his life for us. We may not have to die for someone, but there are other ways to practice sacrificial love: listening, helping, encouraging, giving. Think of someone in particular who needs this kind of love today. Give all the love you can and then try to give a little more.

**15:15** Because Jesus Christ is Lord and Master, he should call us servants, but instead he calls us friends. How comforting and reassuring to be chosen as Christ's friends. Because he is Lord and Master, we owe him our unqualified obedience, but Jesus asks us to obey him because we love him.

**15:16** Jesus made the first choice—to love and to die for us, to offer us eternal life. We make the next choice—to accept or reject his offer. Without *his* choice, we would have no choice to make.

**15:17** Christians will get plenty of hatred from the world; from each other we need love and support. Do you allow small problems to get in the way of loving other believers? Jesus commands that you love them, and he will give you the strength to do it.

**15:26** Once again Jesus offers hope. The Holy Spirit gives strength to endure the unreasonable hatred and evil in our world and the hostility many have toward Christ.

**15:26** Jesus uses two names for the Holy Spirit—*Comforter* and *Spirit of truth*. The word *Comforter* conveys the helping, encourag-

ing, and strengthening work of the Spirit. *Spirit of truth* points to the teaching, illuminating, and reminding work of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit ministers to both the head and the heart. "Proceedeth from the Father" means the Spirit goes out from the Father. This is no angelic being but the divine person himself.

**16:1–16** In his last moments with his disciples, Jesus (1) warned them about further persecution, (2) told them where, when, and why he was going, and (3) assured them they would not be left alone, but that the Spirit would come. He knew what lay ahead, and he did not want their faith shaken or destroyed. God wants you to know you are not alone. You have the Holy Spirit to comfort you, teach you truth, and help you.

**16:2** Fulfillment of this prediction happened when Stephen was expelled from the synagogue and stoned to death (Acts 7:57–60). Saul (who later became Paul), under the authority of the High Priest, went through the land persecuting Christians (Acts 9:1, 2).

**16:5** Although the disciples had asked Jesus about his death (13:36; 14:5), they had never wondered about its meaning. They were mostly concerned about themselves. If Jesus went, what would become of them?

**16:7** Unless Jesus did what he came to do, there would be no Gospel. If he did not die, he could not remove our sins; he could not rise again and defeat death. If he did not go back to the Father,

**16:9**  
John 15:22  
**16:10**  
Acts 3:14; 7:52  
Rom 1:17  
1 Pet 3:18  
**16:11**  
John 12:31  
**16:13**  
John 14:17, 26  
**16:15**  
John 17:10  
**16:16**  
John 14:18-24

will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. <sup>8</sup>And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: <sup>9</sup>of sin, because they believe not on me; <sup>10</sup>of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; <sup>11</sup>of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

<sup>12</sup>I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. <sup>13</sup>Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. <sup>14</sup>He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you. <sup>15</sup>All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you.

<sup>16</sup>A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.

### *Jesus teaches about using his name in prayer (218)*

<sup>17</sup>Then said *some* of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? <sup>18</sup>They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith.

<sup>19</sup>Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, **Do ye inquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me?** <sup>20</sup>Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. <sup>21</sup>A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. <sup>22</sup>And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. <sup>23</sup>And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give *it* you. <sup>24</sup>Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

<sup>25</sup>These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father. <sup>26</sup>At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: <sup>27</sup>for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. <sup>28</sup>I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.

<sup>29</sup>His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. <sup>30</sup>Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.

**16:8** *reprove*: convict. **16:13** *howbeit*: however. **16:18** *cannot tell*: do not understand. **16:19** *were desirous*: wanted. **16:20** *verily*: truly. **16:21** *travail*: labor. *man*: baby. **16:24** *hitherto*: until now. **16:25** *proverbs*: figurative language. *shew*: tell. **16:29** *lo*: look.

**16:20**  
Mark 16:10  
Luke 23:27  
John 20:20  
**16:21**  
Isa 13:8; 21:3;  
26:17  
Acts 13:33  
Col 1:18  
**16:22**  
Isa 66:14  
John 20:20  
**16:23**  
John 14:20; 16:26  
**16:24**  
John 15:11  
**16:25**  
Ps 78:2  
John 10:6  
**16:27**  
John 8:42; 14:21;  
17:8  
**16:28**  
John 13:3

the Holy Spirit would not come. Christ's presence on earth was limited to one place at a time. His leaving meant he could be present to the whole world through the Holy Spirit.

**16:8–11** Three important tasks of the Holy Spirit are (1) convincing the world of its sin and calling it to repentance, (2) showing the standard of God's righteousness to anyone who believes, because Christ would no longer be physically present on earth, and (3) demonstrating Christ's judgment over Satan.

**16:9** According to Jesus, not believing in him is *sin*.

**16:10, 11** Christ's death on the cross made a personal relationship with God available to us. When we confess our sin, God declares us righteous and delivers us from judgment for our sins.

**16:13** The truth into which the Holy Spirit guides us is the truth about Christ. He also helps us through patient practice to discern right from wrong.

**16:13** Jesus said the Holy Spirit would show them "things to come"—the nature of their mission, the opposition they would face, and the final outcome of their efforts. They didn't fully understand these promises until the Holy Spirit came after Jesus' death and resurrection. Then the Holy Spirit revealed truths to the disciples that they wrote down in the books that now form the New Testament.

**16:16** Jesus was referring to his death, now only a few hours away, and his resurrection three days later.

**16:20** What a contrast between the disciples and the world. The world rejoiced as the disciples wept, but they would see him again (in three days) and rejoice. The world's values are often the opposite of God's values. This can cause Christians to feel like misfits. But even if life is difficult now, one day we will rejoice. Keep your eye on the future and on God's promises!

**16:23–27** Jesus is talking about a new relationship between the believer and God. Previously, people approached God through priests. After Jesus' resurrection, any believer could approach God directly. A new day has dawned and now all believers are priests, talking with God personally and directly (see Hebrews 10:19–23). We approach God, not because of our own merit, but because Jesus, our great High Priest, has made us acceptable to God.

**16:30** The disciples believed Jesus' words because they were convinced he knew everything. But their belief was only a first step toward the great faith they would receive when the Holy Spirit came to dwell in them.



<sup>31</sup>Jesus answered them, *Do ye now believe?* <sup>32</sup>Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. <sup>33</sup>These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

### Jesus prays for himself (219)

**17** These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, *Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:* <sup>2</sup>as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. <sup>3</sup>And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. <sup>4</sup>I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. <sup>5</sup>And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

### Jesus prays for his disciples (220)

<sup>6</sup>I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. <sup>7</sup>Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. <sup>8</sup>For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received *them*, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. <sup>9</sup>I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. <sup>10</sup>And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. <sup>11</sup>And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we *are*. <sup>12</sup>While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

<sup>13</sup>And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. <sup>14</sup>I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. <sup>15</sup>I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the

17:2 *flesh*: men. 17:6 *manifested*: made known. *kept*: obeyed. 17:8 *surely*: with certainty. 17:11 *keep*: protect. 17:15 *evil*: evil one.

16:32  
Zech 13:7  
Matt 26:31  
John 8:29  
16:33  
John 14:27  
Rom 5:1; 8:37  
1 Jn 5:4

17:1  
John 13:31  
17:2  
Matt 28:18  
John 6:37, 39  
17:3  
Phil 3:8  
1 Jn 5:20  
17:5  
John 1:1-2; 17:24  
Phil 2:6

17:6  
John 17:26  
17:8  
John 13:3; 16:30  
17:9  
1 Jn 5:19  
17:10  
John 16:15  
17:11  
John 10:30; 17:21  
Gal 3:28  
17:12  
John 6:39  
17:13  
John 7:33; 15:11  
17:14  
John 15:18-19  
17:15  
1 Jn 5:18

**16:31–33** As Christians, we should expect continuing tension with an unbelieving world that is “out of sync” with Christ, his Gospel, and his people. At the same time, we can expect our relationship with Christ to produce peace and comfort, because we are “in sync” with him.

**16:32** The disciples scattered after Jesus was arrested (see Mark 14:50). Jesus accepted their statement of faith even though he knew their weakness. He knew they would have to grow into people whose words and lives matched even to the point of death. He takes us through the same process. How well are you living out what you say you believe about Jesus?

**16:33** Jesus sums up all he had told them this night, tying together themes from 14:27–29; 16:1–4; and 16:9–11. With these words he tells his disciples to take courage. In spite of the inevitable struggles they will face, they are not alone. Jesus does not abandon us to our struggles either. If we remember that the ultimate victory has already been won, we can claim the peace of Christ in the most troublesome times.

**17:1ff** This entire chapter is Jesus’ prayer. From it, we learn that the world is a tremendous battleground where the forces under Satan’s power and those under God’s authority are at war. Satan and his forces are motivated by bitter hatred for Christ and his forces. Jesus prayed for his disciples, including those of us who follow him today. He prayed that God would keep his chosen believers safe from Satan’s power, making them pure and holy, uniting them through his truth.

**17:3** How do we get eternal life? Jesus tells us clearly here—by knowing God the Father himself through his Son, Jesus

Christ. Eternal life requires entering into a personal relationship with God in Jesus Christ. When we admit our sin and turn away from it, Christ’s love lives in us by the Holy Spirit.

**17:5** Before Jesus came to earth, he was one with God. Now that his mission on earth was almost finished, he was asking his Father to restore him to his original place of honor and authority. Jesus’ resurrection and ascension—and Stephen’s dying exclamation (Acts 7:56)—attest that Jesus did return to his exalted position at the right hand of God.

**17:10** What did Jesus mean when he said he is glorified in his followers? God’s glory is the revelation of his character and presence. The lives of Jesus’ disciples reveal his character, and he is present to the world through them. Does your life reveal Jesus’ character and presence?

**17:11** Jesus is asking that the disciples be united in harmony and love as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are united—the strongest of all unions. (See the note on 17:21–23.)

**17:12** Judas was the “son of perdition” who perished because he betrayed Jesus (see Psalm 41:9).

**17:13** Joy is a common theme in Christ’s teachings—he wants us to be joyful (see 5:11; 16:24, 33). The key to immeasurable joy is living in close contact with him, the source of all joy. When we do, we will experience God’s special care and protection, and see the victory God brings even when defeat seems certain.

**17:14** The world hates Christians because Christians’ values differ from the world’s. Since Christ’s followers don’t cooperate with the world by joining in their sin, they are living accusations against the world’s immorality. The world follows Satan’s agenda, and Satan is the avowed enemy of Jesus and his people.

17:17  
John 15:3  
17:18  
John 20:21  
17:19  
Heb 2:11

17:20  
John 17:9  
17:21  
John 10:38  
Gal 3:28  
17:22  
John 17:11  
17:23  
John 16:27; 17:5  
17:24  
John 1:14; 12:26  
17:25  
Matt 11:27  
17:26  
John 15:9

<sup>16</sup>They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. <sup>17</sup>Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. <sup>18</sup>As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. <sup>19</sup>And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

### Jesus prays for future believers (221)

<sup>20</sup>Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; <sup>21</sup>that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

<sup>22</sup>And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: <sup>23</sup>I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. <sup>24</sup>Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

<sup>25</sup>O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. <sup>26</sup>And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

## 2. Jesus completes his mission

Jesus is betrayed and arrested

(224/Matthew 26:47–56; Mark 14:43–52; Luke 22:47–53)

18:1  
2 Sam 15:23  
Matt 26:36  
Mark 14:32  
18:3-11  
//Matt 26:47-56  
//Mark 14:43-50  
//Luke 22:47-53

18:3  
John 7:32, 45

**18** When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples. <sup>2</sup>And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples. <sup>3</sup>Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.

**17:23** made perfect in: completely. **17:26** declared unto: made known to. wherewith: with which. **18:1** went forth: went out. **18:2** oftentimes resorted thither: often met there. **18:3** band of men: group of soldiers. cometh thither: went there.

**17:17** A follower of Christ becomes sanctified (set apart for sacred use, cleansed and made holy) through believing and obeying the Word of God (Hebrews 4:12). He or she has already accepted forgiveness through Christ's sacrificial death (Hebrews 7:26, 27). But daily application of God's Word has a purifying effect on our minds and hearts. Scripture points out sin, motivates us to confess, renews our relationship with Christ, and guides us back to the right path.

**17:18** Jesus didn't ask God to take believers *out* of the world but instead to use them *in* the world. Because Jesus sends us into the world, we should not try to escape from the world or avoid all relationships with non-Christians. We are called to be salt and light (Matthew 5:13–16), and we are to do the work God sent us to do.

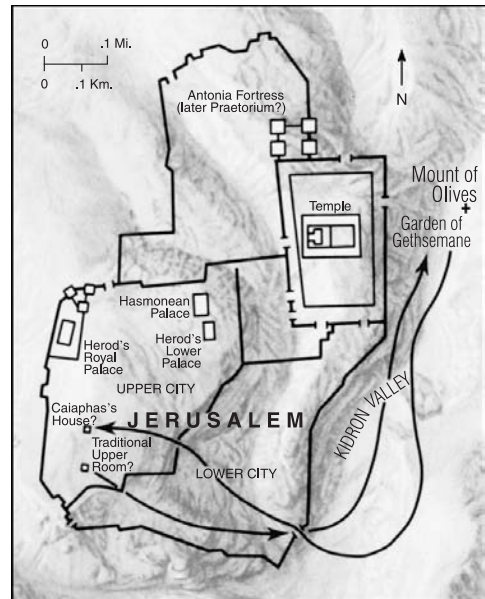
**17:20** Jesus prayed for all who would follow him, including you and others you know. He prayed for oneness (17:11), protection from evil (17:15), and sanctity, or holiness (17:17). Knowing that Jesus prayed for us should give us confidence as we work for his Kingdom.

**17:21–23** Jesus' great desire for his disciples was that they become one. He wanted them unified as a powerful witness to the reality of God's love. Are you helping to unify the body of Christ, the church? You can pray for other Christians, avoid gossip, build others up, work together in humility, give your time and money, lift up Christ, and refuse to get sidetracked arguing over divisive matters.

**17:21–23** Jesus prayed for unity among the believers based on the believers' oneness with him and the Father. Christians can know unity among themselves if they are living in union with God. For example, each branch living in union with the vine is united with all other branches doing the same.

**18:3** The officers were members of the Temple guard; they were Jews given authority by the religious leaders to make arrests for minor infractions. The band of men may have been a small contingent of Roman soldiers who did not participate in

the arrest but accompanied the officers to make sure matters didn't get out of control.



**BETRAYAL IN THE GARDEN** After eating the Passover meal in the Upper Room, Jesus and his disciples went to Gethsemane, where Judas led the Temple guard to arrest Jesus. Jesus was then taken to Caiaphas's house for his first of many trials.

<sup>4</sup>Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, **Whom seek ye?** **18:4**  
John 6:64

<sup>5</sup>They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus saith unto them, **I am he.** And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. <sup>6</sup>As soon then as he had said unto them, **I am he,** they went backward, and fell to the ground.

<sup>7</sup>Then asked he them again, **Whom seek ye?**

And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

<sup>8</sup>Jesus answered, **I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: <sup>9</sup>that the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.** **18:9**  
John 6:39; 17:12

**18:10**  
Luke 22:36, 38

<sup>10</sup>Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. <sup>11</sup>Then said Jesus unto Peter, **Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?** **18:11**  
Matt 20:22; 26:39  
Mark 10:38; 14:36  
Luke 22:42

### *Annas questions Jesus (225)*

<sup>12</sup>Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him, <sup>13</sup>and led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year. <sup>14</sup>Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people. **18:12-14**  
//Matt 26:57-58  
//Mark 14:53-54  
//Luke 22:54

<sup>15</sup>And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and *so did* another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. <sup>16</sup>But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. <sup>17</sup>Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also *one* of this man's disciples? **18:13**  
Luke 3:2  
John 18:24

He saith, I am not.

<sup>18</sup>And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself. **18:14**  
John 11:49-51  
**18:16-18**  
//Matt 26:69-70  
//Mark 14:66-68  
//Luke 22:55-57

<sup>19</sup>The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. <sup>20</sup>Jesus answered him, **I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. <sup>21</sup>Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.** **18:18**  
Mark 14:54, 67

**18:10** smote: struck. **18:12** took: arrested. **18:14** gave counsel: advised. *expedient*: better. **18:15** palace: courtyard. **18:16** without: outside. **18:17** damsel: girl. **18:19** doctrine: teaching. **18:20** ever: always. *resort*: come together. **18:19-24**  
//Matt 26:59-68  
//Mark 14:55-65  
//Luke 22:63-71  
**18:20**  
Matt 26:55  
John 7:26

**18:4, 5** John does not record Judas's kiss of greeting (Matthew 26:49; Mark 14:45; Luke 22:47, 48); but this kiss marked a turning point for the disciples because with Jesus' arrest each one's life would be radically different. For the first time, Judas openly betrayed Jesus before the other disciples. For the first time, Jesus' loyal disciples ran away from him (Matthew 26:56). The band of disciples would undergo severe testing before they were transformed from hesitant followers to dynamic leaders.

**18:6** The men may have been startled by Jesus' statement or by the words "I am he," a declaration of his divinity (Exodus 3:14). Or perhaps they were overcome by his obvious power and authority.

**18:10, 11** Trying to protect Jesus, Peter pulled a sword and wounded the High Priest's servant. But Jesus told him to put away his sword and allow God's plan to unfold. At times it is tempting to take matters into our own hands, to force the issue. Most often such moves lead to sin. Instead we must trust God to work out his plan. Think of it—if Peter had had his way, Jesus would not have gone to the cross, and God's plan of redemption would have been halted. Luke records that Jesus touched the man's ear and healed him (Luke 22:51).

**18:11** "The cup" refers to the suffering, isolation, and death that Jesus would have to endure in order to atone for the sins of the world.

**18:12, 13** Jesus was immediately taken to the High Priest's residence, even though this was the middle of the night. The religious leaders were in a hurry—they wanted to complete the execution before the Sabbath and get on with the Passover celebration. This residence was a palace; the outer walls enclosed a courtyard where servants and soldiers warmed themselves around a fire.

**18:13** Both Annas and Caiaphas are called High Priests. Annas was Israel's High Priest from A.D. 6 to 15, when he was deposed by Roman rulers. Caiaphas, Annas's son-in-law, was appointed High Priest from A.D. 18 to 36/37. According to Jewish law, the office of High Priest was held for life. Many Jews therefore still considered Annas the High Priest and still called him by that title. But although Annas retained much authority among the Jews, Caiaphas made the final decisions.

Both Caiaphas and Annas cared more about their political ambitions than about their responsibility to lead the people to God. Though religious leaders, they had become evil. As the nation's spiritual leaders, they should have been sensitive to God's revelation in his Word. They should have known that Jesus was the Messiah about whom the Scriptures spoke, and they should have pointed the people to him. But when men pursue evil, they want to eliminate all opposition. Instead of honestly evaluating Jesus' claims based on their knowledge of Scripture, they sought to further their own selfish ambitions and were willing to kill God's Son if that's what it took to do it.

**18:15, 16** The other disciple is probably John, the author of this Gospel. He knew the High Priest and identified himself to the girl at the gate. Because of his connections, he got himself and Peter into the courtyard. But Peter refused to identify himself as Jesus' follower. Peter's experiences in the next few hours would change his life. For more information about Peter, see his Profile in Matthew 26, p. 1397.

**18:19ff** During the night, Jesus had two pretrial hearings before Annas prior to being taken to Caiaphas and the entire Jewish Council (Mark 14:53–65). The religious leaders knew they had

18:22  
John 19:3

18:23  
Matt 5:39  
Acts 23:2-5

18:24  
Matt 26:3

<sup>22</sup>And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?

<sup>23</sup>Jesus answered him, **If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?**

<sup>24</sup>Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.

*Peter denies knowing Jesus*

(227/Matthew 26:69–75; Mark 14:66–72; Luke 22:54–65)

<sup>25</sup>And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also *one* of his disciples?

18:23 *evil: wrong, smitest thou: do you strike.*

18:25-27

//Matt 26:71-75  
//Mark 14:69-72  
//Luke 22:58-62

## THE SIX STAGES OF JESUS' TRIAL

Although Jesus' trial lasted less than 18 hours, he was taken to six different hearings.

Before Jewish Authorities

Preliminary Hearing before Annas (John 18:12–24)

Because the office of High Priest was for life, Annas was still the "official" High Priest in the eyes of the Jews, even though the Romans had appointed another. Thus, Annas still carried much weight in the Council.

Hearing before Caiaphas (Matthew 26:57–68)

Like the hearing before Annas, this hearing was conducted at night in secrecy. It was full of illegalities that made a mockery of justice (see the chart in Matthew 27, p. 1401).

Before Roman Authorities

Trial before the Council (Matthew 27:1, 2)

Just after daybreak, 70 members of the Council met to rubber-stamp their approval of the previous hearings to make them appear legal. The purpose of this trial was not to determine justice, but to justify their own preconceptions of Jesus' guilt.

First Hearing before Pilate (Luke 23:1–5)

The religious leaders had condemned Jesus to death on religious grounds, but only the Roman government could grant the death penalty. Thus, they took Jesus to Pilate, the Roman governor, and accused him of treason and rebellion, crimes for which the Roman government gave the death penalty. Pilate saw at once that Jesus was innocent, but he was afraid about the uproar being caused by the religious leaders.

Hearing before Herod (Luke 23:6–12)

Because Jesus' home was in the region of Galilee, Pilate sent Jesus to Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee, who was in Jerusalem for the Passover celebration. Herod was eager to see Jesus do a miracle, but when Jesus remained silent, Herod wanted nothing to do with him and sent him back to Pilate.

Last Hearing before Pilate (Luke 23:13–25)

Pilate didn't like the religious leaders. He wasn't interested in condemning Jesus because he knew Jesus was innocent. However, he knew that another uprising in his district might cost him his job. First he tried to compromise with the religious leaders by having Jesus beaten, an illegal action in itself. But finally he gave in and handed Jesus over to be executed. Pilate's self-interest was stronger than his sense of justice.

no grounds for charging him, so they tried to build evidence against him by using false witnesses (Mark 14:55–59).

**18:22–27** We can easily blame the Jewish Council for their injustice in condemning Jesus, but we must remember that Peter and the rest of the disciples also contributed to Jesus' pain by deserting and denying him (Matthew 26:56). While most of us are not like the religious leaders, we are all like the disciples, for all of us have been guilty of denying Christ as Lord in vital areas of our lives or of keeping secret our identity as believers in times of pressure. Don't excuse yourself by pointing at others whose sins seem worse than yours. Instead, come to Jesus for forgiveness and healing.

**18:25** The other three Gospels say that Peter's three denials happened near a fire outside Caiaphas's palace. John places the

first denial outside Annas's home, the other two outside Caiaphas's home. This was very likely the same courtyard. The High Priest's residence was large, and Annas and Caiaphas lived near each other.

**18:25–27** Imagine standing outside while Jesus, your Lord and Master, is questioned. Imagine watching this man, whom you have come to believe is the long-awaited Messiah, being abused and beaten. Naturally Peter was confused and afraid. It is a serious sin to deny Christ, but Jesus forgave Peter (21:15–17). No sin is too great for Jesus to forgive if you are truly repentant. He will forgive even your worst sin if you turn from it and ask his pardon.

He denied *it*, and said, I am not.

<sup>26</sup>One of the servants of the high priest, being *his* kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him? <sup>27</sup>Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew.

**18:27**  
John 13:38

*Jesus stands trial before Pilate (230/Matthew 27:11–14; Mark 15:2–5; Luke 23:1–5)*

<sup>28</sup>Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover. <sup>29</sup>Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man?

**18:28-38**  
/Matt 27:1-2, 11-14  
/Mark 15:1-5  
/Luke 23:1-5

<sup>30</sup>They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.

<sup>31</sup>Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law.

The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: <sup>32</sup>that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.

**18:32**  
Matt 20:19  
John 12:32

<sup>33</sup>Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?

**18:33**  
Luke 23:3  
John 19:9

<sup>34</sup>Jesus answered him, **Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?**

<sup>35</sup>Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?

<sup>36</sup>Jesus answered, **My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.**

**18:36**  
Matt 26:53  
Luke 17:21  
John 6:15

**18:26** kinsman: relative. **18:27** crew: crowed. **18:30** malefactor: criminal. **18:36** hence: here.

**18:27** This fulfilled Jesus' words to Peter after he promised he would never deny him (13:38).

**18:28** By Jewish law, entering the house of a Gentile would cause a Jewish person to be ceremonially defiled. As a result, he could not take part in worship at the Temple or celebrate the

feasts until he was restored to a state of "cleanness." Afraid of being defiled, these men stayed outside the house where they had taken Jesus for trial. They kept up the ceremonial requirements of their religion while harboring murder and treachery in their hearts.

**18:29** This Roman governor, Pilate, was in charge of Judea (the region where Jerusalem was located) from A.D. 26 to 36. Pilate was unpopular with the Jews because he had raided the Temple treasuries for money to build an aqueduct. He did not like the Jews, but when Jesus, the King of the Jews, stood before him, Pilate found him innocent.

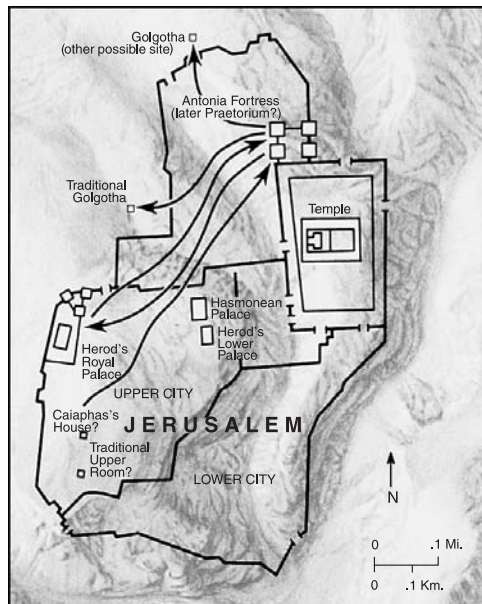
**18:30** Pilate knew what was going on; he knew that the religious leaders hated Jesus, and he did not want to act as their executioner. They could not sentence him to death themselves—permission had to come from a Roman leader. But Pilate initially refused to sentence Jesus without sufficient evidence. Jesus' life became a pawn in a political power struggle.

**18:31ff** Pilate made four attempts to deal with Jesus: (1) He tried to put the responsibility on someone else (18:31); (2) he tried to find a way of escape so he could release Jesus (18:39); (3) he tried to compromise with the people—beating Jesus rather than handing him over to die (19:1–3); and (4) he tried a direct appeal to the sympathy of the accusers (19:15). Everyone has to decide what to do with Jesus. Pilate tried to let everyone else decide for him—and in the end, he lost.

**18:32** This prediction is recorded in Matthew 20:19. Crucifixion was a common method of execution for criminals who were not Roman citizens.

**18:34** If Pilate was asking as the Roman governor, he would be inquiring whether Jesus was setting up a rebel government. But the Jews were using the word *king* to mean their religious ruler, the Messiah. Israel was a captive nation, under the authority of the Roman Empire. A rival king might have threatened Rome; a Messiah could have been a purely religious leader.

**18:36, 37** Pilate asked Jesus a straightforward question and Jesus answered clearly. He is a king, but one whose Kingdom is not of this world. There seems to have been no question in Pilate's mind that Jesus spoke the truth and was innocent of any crime. It also seems apparent that while recognizing the truth, Pilate chose to reject it. It is a tragedy when we fail to recognize the truth. It is a greater tragedy when we recognize the truth but fail to heed it.



**JESUS' TRIAL AND CRUCIFIXION** Jesus was taken from trial before the Jewish Council to trial before the Roman governor, Pilate, in the Antonia Fortress. Pilate sent him to Herod (Luke 23:6–12), but Herod just returned Jesus to Pilate. Responding to threats from the mob, Pilate finally turned Jesus over to be crucified.



18:37  
John 8:47  
1 Jn 4:6

<sup>37</sup>Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then?

Jesus answered, **Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.**

*Pilate hands Jesus over to be crucified*

(232/ Matthew 27:15–26; Mark 15:6–15; Luke 23:13–25)

<sup>38</sup>Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault *at all*. <sup>39</sup>But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

<sup>40</sup>Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

18:39–19:5  
/Matt 27:15–31  
/Mark 15:6–20  
/Luke 23:13–25

19:1  
Isa 50:6; 53:5

**19** Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged *him*. <sup>2</sup>And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put *it* on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, <sup>3</sup>and said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands.

19:3  
John 18:22

<sup>4</sup>Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. <sup>5</sup>Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And *Pilate* saith unto them, Behold the man!

19:4  
Luke 23:4  
John 18:38

<sup>6</sup>When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify *him*, crucify *him*.

19:6  
John 18:31

Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify *him*: for I find no fault in him.

19:7  
Lev 24:16  
Matt 26:63–66

<sup>7</sup>The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.

<sup>8</sup>When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; <sup>9</sup>and went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. <sup>10</sup>Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?

19:11  
Rom 13:1

<sup>11</sup>Jesus answered, **Thou couldst have no power *at all* against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.**

18:38 *fault*: guilt. 19:1 *scourged him*: had him whipped. 19:2 *platted*: twisted. 19:3 *smote*: struck. 19:4 *went forth*: went out. 19:7 *made himself*: claimed to be. 19:8 *the more*: even more. 19:9 *whence art thou*: where are you from.

**18:38** Pilate was cynical; he thought all truth was relative. To many government officials, truth was whatever the majority of people agreed with or whatever helped their own personal power and political advancement. When there is no standard or acknowledgement of truth, there is no basis for moral right and wrong. Justice becomes whatever works or helps those in power. In Jesus and his Word we have a standard for truth and for our moral behavior.

**18:40** Barabbas was a rebel against Rome and, although he had committed murder, he was probably a hero among the Jews. The Jews hated being governed by Rome and paying taxes to the despised government. Barabbas, who had led a rebellion and failed, was released instead of Jesus, the only one who could truly help Israel. For more on Barabbas, see the note on Luke 23:18, 19.

**19:1ff** To grasp the full picture of Jesus' crucifixion, read John's perspective along with the other three accounts in Matthew 27, Mark 15, and Luke 23. Each writer adds meaningful details, but each has the same message—Jesus died on the cross, in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, so that we could be saved from our sins and have eternal life.

**19:1–3** Scourging could have killed Jesus. The usual procedure was to bare the upper half of the victim's body and tie his hands to a pillar before whipping him with a three-pronged whip. The number of lashes was determined by the severity of the crime; up to 40 were permitted under Jewish law (Deuteronomy 25:3). After being scourged, Jesus also endured other agonies recorded here and in the other Gospels.

**19:2–5** The soldiers went beyond their orders to whip Jesus—they also mocked his claim to royalty by placing a crown of thorns on his head and a royal robe on his shoulders.

**19:7** The truth finally came out—the religious leaders had not brought Jesus to Pilate because he was causing rebellion against Rome, but because they thought he had broken their religious laws. Blasphemy, one of the most serious crimes in Jewish law, deserved the death penalty. Accusing Jesus of blasphemy would give credibility to their case in the eyes of Jews; accusing Jesus of treason would give credibility to their case in the eyes of the Romans. They didn't care which accusation Pilate listened to, as long as he would cooperate with them in killing Jesus.

**19:10** Throughout the trial we see that Jesus was in control, not Pilate or the religious leaders. Pilate vacillated, the Jewish leaders reacted out of hatred and anger, but Jesus remained composed. He knew the truth, he knew God's plan, and he knew the reason for his trial. Despite the pressure and persecution, Jesus remained unmoved. It was really Pilate and the religious leaders who were on trial, not Jesus. When you are questioned or ridiculed because of your faith, remember that while you may be on trial before your accusers, they are on trial before God.

**19:11** When Jesus said the man who delivered him to Pilate was guiltier than Pilate, he was not excusing Pilate for reacting to the political pressure placed on him. Pilate was responsible for his decision about Jesus. Caiaphas and the other religious leaders were guilty of a greater sin because they premeditated Jesus' murder.

<sup>12</sup>And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar. **19:12**  
 Luke 23:2  
 Acts 17:7

<sup>13</sup>When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. <sup>14</sup>And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! **19:13**  
 Matt 27:19

<sup>15</sup>But they cried out, Away with *him*, away with *him*, crucify him.

Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King?

The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.

<sup>16</sup>Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. **19:16-27**  
 //Matt 27:32-44  
 //Mark 15:21-32  
 //Luke 23:26-43  
 \*Ps 22:18

*Jesus is led away to be crucified*

(**234**/Matthew 27:32–34; Mark 15:21–24; Luke 23:26–31)

And they took Jesus, and led *him* away. <sup>17</sup>And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the *place* of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha:

*Jesus is placed on the cross*

(**235**/Matthew 27:35–44; Mark 15:25–32; Luke 23:32–43)

<sup>18</sup>Where they crucified him, and two others with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst. <sup>19</sup>And Pilate wrote a title, and put *it* on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. <sup>20</sup>This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, *and* Greek, *and* Latin.

<sup>21</sup>Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews.

<sup>22</sup>Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.

<sup>23</sup>Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also *his* coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. <sup>24</sup>They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.

**19:12** *speaketh against*: opposes. **19:14** *preparation of*: day of preparation. **19:17** *bearing*: carrying, *went forth*: went out, *a skull*: the skull. **19:18** *in the midst*: in between. **19:19** *title*: notice. **19:20** *nigh*: near. **19:23** *coat*: tunic. *the top throughout*: top to bottom. **19:24** *rend*: tear. *raiment*: garments. *vesture*: clothing.

**19:12, 13** This veiled threat by the Jewish leaders pressured Pilate into allowing Jesus to be crucified. As Roman governor of the area, Pilate was expected to keep the peace. Because Rome could not afford to keep large numbers of troops in the outlying regions, they maintained control by crushing rebellions immediately with brute force. Pilate was afraid that reports to Caesar of insurrection in his region would cost him his job and perhaps even his life. When we face a tough decision, we can take the easy way out, or we can stand for what is right regardless of the cost. If we know the good we ought to do and don't do it, we sin (James 4:17).

**19:13** This stone-paved platform was part of the Tower of Antonia bordering the northwest corner of the Temple complex.

**19:15** The Jewish leaders were so desperate to get rid of Jesus that despite their intense hatred for Rome, they shouted, "We have no king but Caesar." How ironic that they feigned allegiance to Rome while rejecting their own Messiah! Their own words condemned them, for God was to be their only true King and they had abandoned every trace of loyalty to him. The priests had truly lost their reason for existence—instead of turning people to God, they claimed allegiance to Rome in order to kill their Messiah.

**19:17** This place called *Golgotha*, "the skull," was probably a hill outside Jerusalem along a main road. Many executions took place here so the Romans could use them as an example to the people.

**19:18** Crucifixion was a Roman form of execution. The condemned man was forced to carry his cross along a main road to the execution site, as a warning to the people. Crosses and methods of crucifixion varied. Jesus was nailed to his cross; some people were tied with ropes. Death came by suffocation, because the weight of the body made breathing difficult as the victim lost strength. Crucifixion was a hideously slow and painful death.

**19:19** This sign was meant to be ironic. A king, stripped naked and executed in public view, had obviously lost his kingdom forever. But Jesus, who turns the world's wisdom upside down, was just coming into his Kingdom. His death and resurrection would strike the deathblow to Satan's rule and would establish his eternal authority over the earth. Few people reading the sign that bleak afternoon understood its real meaning, but the sign was absolutely true. All was not lost. Jesus was King of the Jews—and of the Gentiles, and of the whole universe.

**19:20** The signboard was written in three languages: Hebrew for the native Jews; Latin for the Roman occupation forces; and Greek for foreigners and Jews visiting from other lands. In a double irony, the multilingual sign declared that Jesus was Lord of all.

**19:23, 24** Roman soldiers in charge of crucifixions customarily took for themselves the clothes of the condemned men. They cast lots to determine who would get Jesus' seamless robe, the most valuable piece of clothing. This fulfilled the prophecy in Psalm 22:18.

**19:25**

Matt 27:55-56  
Mark 15:40-41  
Luke 8:2; 23:49

**19:26**

John 2:4; 13:23;  
20:2; 21:7, 20

**19:28-37**

//Matt 27:45-56  
//Mark 15:33-41  
//Luke 23:44-49

**19:28**

†Pss 22:15; 69:21

**19:30**

Job 19:26-27

<sup>25</sup>Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. <sup>26</sup>When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, **Woman, behold thy son!** <sup>27</sup>Then saith he to the disciple, **Behold thy mother!** And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own *home*.

*Jesus dies on the cross (236/Matthew 27:45–56; Mark 15:33–41; Luke 23:44–49)*

<sup>28</sup>After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, **I thirst.** <sup>29</sup>Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put *it* upon hyssop, and put *it* to his mouth. <sup>30</sup>When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, **It is finished:** and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

**19:29** *vinegar:* wine vinegar. *hyssop:* a branch of hyssop. **19:30** *the ghost:* his spirit.



# MARY MAGDALENE

The absence of women among the 12 disciples has bothered a few people. But it is clear that there were many women among Jesus' followers. It is also clear that Jesus did not treat women as others in his culture did; he treated them with dignity, as people with worth.

Mary of Magdala was an early follower of Jesus and certainly deserves to be called a disciple. An energetic, impulsive, caring woman, she not only traveled with Jesus, but also contributed to the needs of the group. She was present at the crucifixion and was on her way to anoint Jesus' body on Sunday morning when she discovered the empty tomb. Mary was the first to see Jesus after his resurrection.

Mary Magdalene is a heartwarming example of thankful living. Her life was miraculously freed by Jesus when he cast seven demons out of her. In every glimpse we have of her, she was acting out her appreciation for the freedom Christ had given her. That freedom allowed her to stand under Christ's cross when all the disciples except John were hiding in fear. After Jesus' death, she intended to give his body every respect. Like the rest of Jesus' followers, she never expected his bodily resurrection—but she was overjoyed to discover it.

Mary's faith was not complicated, but it was direct and genuine. She was more eager to believe and obey than to understand everything. Jesus honored her childlike faith by appearing to her first and by entrusting her with the first message of his resurrection.

### Strengths and accomplishments:

- Contributed to the needs of Jesus and his disciples
- One of the few faithful followers present at Jesus' death on the cross
- First to see the risen Christ

### Weakness and mistake:

- Jesus had to cast seven demons out of her

### Lessons from her life:

- Those who are obedient grow in understanding
- Women are vital to Jesus' ministry
- Jesus relates to women as he created them—as equal reflectors of God's image

### Vital statistics:

- Where: Magdala, Jerusalem
- Occupation: We are not told, but she seems to have been wealthy
- Contemporaries: Jesus, the 12 disciples, Mary, Martha, Lazarus, Jesus' mother Mary

### Key verse:

"Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils" (Mark 16:9).

Mary Magdalene's story is told in Matthew 27—28; Mark 15—16; Luke 23—24; and John 19—20. She is also mentioned in Luke 8:2.

**19:25–27** Even while dying on the cross, Jesus was concerned about his family. He instructed John to care for Mary, his mother. Our families are precious gifts from God, and we should value and care for them under all circumstances. Neither Christian work nor key responsibilities in any job excuse us from caring for our families. What can you do today to show your love to your family?

**19:27** Jesus asked his close friend John, the writer of this Gospel, to care for his mother, Mary, whose husband, Joseph, must have been dead by this time. Why didn't Jesus assign this task to his brothers? As the eldest son, Jesus entrusted his mother to a person who stayed with him at the cross—and that was John.

**19:30** Until this time, a complicated system of sacrifices had

atoned for sins. Sin separates people from God, and only through the sacrifice of an animal, a substitute, could people be forgiven of sin and become clean before God. But people sin continually, so frequent sacrifices were required. Jesus, however, became the final and ultimate sacrifice for sin. The word *finished* is the same as "paid in full." Jesus came to *finish* God's work of salvation (4:34; 17:4), to pay the full penalty for our sins. With his death, the complex sacrificial system ended because Jesus took all sin upon himself. Now we can freely approach God because of what Jesus did for us. Those who believe in Jesus' death and resurrection can live eternally with God and escape the penalty that comes from sin.

<sup>31</sup>The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away. <sup>32</sup>Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. <sup>33</sup>But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: <sup>34</sup>but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. <sup>35</sup>And he that saw *it* bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. <sup>36</sup>For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. <sup>37</sup>And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

**19:31**  
Deut 21:22-23

**19:35**  
John 20:30-31;  
21:24  
1 Jn 1:1

**19:36**  
†Exod 12:46  
Num 9:12  
†Ps 34:20

**19:37**  
†Zech 12:10  
Rev 1:7

*Jesus is laid in the tomb* (237/Matthew 27:57–61; Mark 15:42–47; Luke 23:50–56)

<sup>38</sup>And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave *him* leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. <sup>39</sup>And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound *weight*. <sup>40</sup>Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. <sup>41</sup>Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. <sup>42</sup>There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation *day*; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

**19:38-42**  
†Matt 27:57-61  
†Mark 15:42-47  
†Luke 23:50-56

**19:39**  
John 3:1-2; 7:50

**19:40**  
Luke 24:12  
John 20:5-7

*Jesus rises from the dead* (239/Matthew 28:1–7; Mark 16:1–8; Luke 24:1–12)

**20** The first *day* of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. <sup>2</sup>Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

**20:1-8**  
†Matt 28:1-8  
†Mark 16:1-8  
†Luke 24:1-12

**20:2**  
John 13:23

**19:31** besought: asked. **19:34** forthwith: at once. **19:35** bare record: has borne witness. **19:38** leave: permission. **19:40** manner: custom. **19:41** sepulchre: tomb. **19:42** nigh at hand: nearby. **20:1** sepulchre: tomb.

**19:31** It was against God's Law to leave the body of a dead person exposed overnight (Deuteronomy 21:23), and it was also against the Law to work after sundown on Friday, when the Sabbath began. This is why the religious leaders urgently wanted to get Jesus' body off the cross and buried by sundown.

**19:31-35** These Romans were experienced soldiers. They knew from many previous crucifixions whether a man was dead or alive. There was no question that Jesus was dead when they checked him, so they decided not to break his legs as they had done to the other victims. Piercing his side and seeing the separation of blood and water (indicating that the heart had been pierced) was further proof of his death. Some people say Jesus didn't really die, that he only passed out—and that's how he "came back to life." But we have the witness of an impartial party, the Roman soldiers, that Jesus died on the cross (Mark 15:44, 45).

**19:32** The Roman soldiers broke victims' legs to hurry the death process. When a person hung on a cross, death came by suffocation, but the victim could push against the cross with his legs to hold up his body and keep breathing. With broken legs, he would suffocate almost immediately.

**19:34, 35** The graphic details of Jesus' death are especially important in John's record because he was an eyewitness.

**19:36, 37** Jesus died when the lambs for the Passover meal were being slain. Not a bone was to be broken in these sacrificial lambs (Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12). Jesus, the Lamb of God, was the perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world (1 Corinthians 5:7).

**19:38-42** Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus were secret followers of Jesus. They were afraid to make this known because of their positions in the Jewish community. Joseph was a leader and honored member of the Jewish Council. Nicodemus, also a member of the Council, had come to Jesus by night (3:1) and later tried to defend him before the other religious leaders (7:50–52). Yet they risked their reputations to bury Jesus. Are you a secret believer? Do you hide your faith from your friends and fellow

workers? This is an appropriate time to step out of hiding and let others know whom you follow.

**19:38, 39** Four people were changed in the process of Jesus' death. The criminal, dying on the cross beside Jesus, asked Jesus to include him in his Kingdom (Luke 23:39–43). The Roman captain proclaimed that surely Jesus was the Son of God (Mark 15:39). Joseph and Nicodemus, members of the Jewish Council and secret followers of Jesus (7:50–52), came out of hiding. These men were changed more by Christ's death than by his life. They realized who he was, and that realization brought out their belief, proclamation, and action. When confronted with Jesus and his death, we should be changed—to believe, proclaim, and act.

**19:42** As they buried Jesus, Nicodemus and Joseph had to hurry to avoid working on the Sabbath, which began Friday evening at sundown. This sepulchre, or tomb, was probably a cave carved out of the stone hillside. It was large enough for a man to walk into, so Joseph and Nicodemus carried Jesus' body into it. A large stone was rolled in front of the entrance.

**20:1** Other women came to the tomb along with Mary Magdalene. The other Gospel accounts give their names. For more information on Mary Magdalene, see her Profile in John 19, p. 1587.

**20:1** The stone was not rolled away from the entrance to the tomb so Jesus could get out. He could have left easily without moving the stone. It was rolled away so others could get *in* and see that Jesus was gone.

**20:1ff** People who hear about the resurrection for the first time may need time before they can comprehend this amazing story. Like Mary and the disciples, they may pass through four stages of belief. (1) At first, they may think it is a fabrication, impossible to believe (20:2). (2) Like Peter, they may check out the facts and still be puzzled about what happened (20:6). (3) Only when they encounter Jesus personally are they able to accept the fact of the resurrection (20:16). (4) Then, as they commit themselves to the risen Lord and devote their lives to serving him, they begin to understand fully the reality of his presence with them (20:28).

20:3  
Luke 24:12

20:5  
John 19:40

20:7  
John 11:44

20:9  
John 2:22

<sup>3</sup>Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. <sup>4</sup>So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. <sup>5</sup>And he stooping down, *and looking in*, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. <sup>6</sup>Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, <sup>7</sup>and the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. <sup>8</sup>Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. <sup>9</sup>For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. <sup>10</sup>Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

20:6 *lie*: lying there. 20:7 *napkin*: cloth. 20:9 *knew not*: did not understand.



THOMAS

Thomas, so often remembered as “Doubting Thomas,” deserves to be respected for his faith. He was a doubter, but his doubts had a purpose—he wanted to know the truth. Thomas did not idolize his doubts; he gladly believed when given reasons to do so. He expressed his doubts fully and had them answered completely. Doubting was only his way of responding, not his way of life.

Although our glimpses of Thomas are brief, his character comes through with consistency. He struggled to be faithful to what he knew, despite what he felt. At one point, when it was plain to everyone that Jesus’ life was in danger, only Thomas put into words what most were feeling, “Let us also go, that we may die with him” (John 11:16). He didn’t hesitate to follow Jesus.

We don’t know why Thomas was absent the first time Jesus appeared to the disciples after the resurrection, but he was reluctant to believe their witness to Christ’s resurrection. Not even 10 friends could change his mind!

We can doubt without having to live a doubting way of life. Doubt encourages rethinking. Its purpose is more to sharpen the mind than to change it. Doubt can be used to pose the question, get an answer, and push for a decision. But doubt was never meant to be a permanent condition. Doubt is one foot lifted, poised to step forward or back. There is no motion until the foot comes down.

When you experience doubt, take encouragement from Thomas. He didn’t stay in his doubt, but allowed Jesus to bring him to belief. Take encouragement also from the fact that countless other followers of Christ have struggled with doubts. The answers God gave them may help you too. Don’t settle into doubts, but move on from them to decision and belief. Find another believer with whom you can share your doubts. Silent doubts rarely find answers.

**Strengths and accomplishments:**

- One of Jesus’ 12 disciples
- Intense both in doubt and belief
- Was a loyal and honest man

**Weaknesses and mistakes:**

- Along with the others, abandoned Jesus at his arrest
- Refused to believe the others’ claims to have seen Christ and demanded proof
- Struggled with a pessimistic outlook

**Lessons from his life:**

- Jesus does not reject doubts that are honest and directed to ward belief
- Better to doubt out loud than to disbelieve in silence

**Vital statistics:**

- Where: Galilee, Judea, Samaria
- Occupation: Disciple of Jesus
- Contemporaries: Jesus, other disciples, Herod, Pilate

**Key verses:**

“Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God” (John 20:27, 28).

Thomas’s story is told in the Gospels. He is also mentioned in Acts 1:13.

**20:6, 7** The grave clothes were left as if Jesus’ body had simply vacated them. The head piece was still rolled up in the shape of a head, and it was about the right distance from the wrappings that had enveloped Jesus’ body. A grave robber couldn’t possibly have made off with Jesus’ body and left the linens as if they were still shaped around it.

**20:9** As further proof that the disciples did not fabricate this story, we find that Peter and John were surprised that Jesus was not in the tomb. When John saw the grave clothes looking like an empty cocoon from which Jesus had emerged, he believed Jesus had risen. It wasn’t until after they had seen the empty tomb that they remembered what the Scriptures and Jesus had said—he would die, but he would also rise again!

**20:9** Jesus’ resurrection is the key to the Christian faith. Why? (1) Just as he said, Jesus rose from the dead. We can be confident, therefore, that he will accomplish all he has promised. (2) Jesus’ bodily resurrection shows us that the living Christ, not a false prophet or imposter, is ruler of God’s eternal Kingdom. (3) We can be certain of our own resurrection because Jesus was resurrected. Death is not the end—there is future life. (4) The divine power that brought Jesus back to life is now available to us to bring our spiritually dead selves back to life. (5) The resurrection is the basis for the church’s witness to the world.



*Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene (240/Mark 16:9–11)*

<sup>11</sup>But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down, and *looked* into the sepulchre, <sup>12</sup>and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. <sup>13</sup>And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou?

**20:11-18**  
Mark 16:9-11  
**20:12**  
Mark 16:5  
Luke 24:4

She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

<sup>14</sup>And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. <sup>15</sup>Jesus saith unto her, **Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?**

**20:14**  
Mark 16:9  
Luke 24:16  
John 21:4

She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

<sup>16</sup>Jesus saith unto her, **Mary.**

She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

<sup>17</sup>Jesus saith unto her, **Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.**

**20:17**  
Matt 28:10  
John 16:28  
Rom 8:29  
Col 1:18  
Heb 2:11

<sup>18</sup>Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and *that* he had spoken these things unto her.

*Jesus appears to the disciples behind locked doors (244/Luke 24:36–43)*

<sup>19</sup>Then the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, **Peace be unto you.** <sup>20</sup>And when he had so said, he shewed unto them *his* hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup>Then said Jesus to them again, **Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.** <sup>22</sup>And when he had said this, he breathed on *them*, and saith unto them, **Receive ye the Holy Ghost: <sup>23</sup>whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.**

**20:19-23**  
//Matt 28:16-20  
//Luke 24:36-49  
**20:20**  
John 16:20-22;  
19:34  
**20:21**  
Matt 28:19  
John 17:18  
**20:22**  
John 7:37-39;  
14:16-18, 26

*Jesus appears to the disciples including Thomas (245/Mark 16:14)*

<sup>24</sup>But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup>The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

**20:24**  
John 11:16

**20:11** without: outside. **20:14** thus said: said this. *herself back*: around. **20:15** borne him hence: carried him away. **20:16** Master: Teacher. **20:19** in the midst: among them. **20:23** remit: forgive. **20:25** print: mark. thrust: place.

**20:16** Mary didn't recognize Jesus at first. Her grief had blinded her; she couldn't see him because she didn't expect to see him. Then he spoke her name, and immediately she recognized him. Imagine the love that flooded her heart when she heard her Savior saying her name. Jesus is near you, and he is calling your name. Can you, like Mary, answer him by saying, "Master"?

**20:17** "Touch me not" can also be translated, "Don't hold on to me" or "Don't cling to me." Mary did not want to lose Jesus again. She had not understood the resurrection. Perhaps she thought this was his promised Second Coming (14:3). But Jesus did not want to be detained at the tomb. If he did not ascend to heaven, the Holy Spirit could not come. Both he and Mary had important work to do.

**20:18** Mary did not meet the risen Christ until she had discovered the empty tomb. She responded with joy and obedience in telling the disciples. We cannot meet Christ until we discover that he is indeed alive, that his tomb is empty. Are you filled with joy by this good news, and do you share it with others?

**20:21** Jesus again identified himself with his Father. He told the disciples by whose authority he did his work. Now he passed the job to his disciples of spreading the Gospel of salvation around the world. Whatever God has asked you to do, remember: (1) Your authority comes from God, and (2) Jesus has demonstrated by words and actions how to accomplish the job he has given you. As the Father sent Jesus, Jesus sends his followers.

**20:22** This is a special filling of the Holy Spirit for the disciples; a foretaste of what all believers would experience from the time of

Pentecost (Acts 2) and forever after. To do God's work, we need the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit. We must avoid trying to do his work in our own strength for we will not succeed.

**20:22** There is life in the breath of God. Man was created but did not come alive until God breathed into him the breath of life (Genesis 2:7). His first breath made man different from all other forms of creation. Now, through the breath of Jesus, God imparted eternal spiritual life. With this inbreathing came the power to do God's will on earth.

**20:23** Jesus is telling the disciples their Spirit-powered and Spirit-guided mission—to preach the Good News about Jesus so people's sins might be forgiven. The disciples did not have the power to forgive sins (only God can forgive sins), but Jesus gave them the privilege of telling new believers that their sins *have been* forgiven because they have accepted Jesus' message. All believers have this same privilege. We can announce the forgiveness of sin with certainty when we ourselves have found repentance and faith.

**20:24–29** Have you ever wished you could actually see Jesus, touch him, hear his words? Are there times you want to sit down with him and get his advice? Thomas wanted Jesus' physical presence. But God's plan is wiser. He has not limited himself to one physical body; he wants to be present with you at all times. Even now he is with you in the form of the Holy Spirit. You can talk to him, and you can find his words to you in the pages of the Bible. He can be as real to you as he was to Thomas.

**20:25–28** Jesus wasn't hard on Thomas for his doubts. Despite

**20:28**  
John 1:1, 18;  
10:30; 14:9  
Phil 2:6  
Col 2:9  
Titus 2:13  
2 Pet 1:1  
1 Jn 5:20

**20:29**  
1 Pet 1:8

**20:30**  
John 21:25

**20:31**  
John 3:15; 19:35  
1 Jn 5:13

**21:2**  
John 1:45-51;  
11:16; 20:24

**21:3**  
Luke 5:5

**21:4**  
Luke 24:16  
John 20:14

<sup>26</sup>And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: *then* came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, **Peace be unto you.** <sup>27</sup>Then saith he to Thomas, **Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.**

<sup>28</sup>And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

<sup>29</sup>Jesus saith unto him, **Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.**

<sup>30</sup>And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: <sup>31</sup>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.

*Jesus appears to the disciples while they are fishing (246)*

**21** After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he *himself*. <sup>2</sup>There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the *sons* of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.

<sup>3</sup>Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing.

They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

<sup>4</sup>But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. <sup>5</sup>Then Jesus saith unto them, **Children, have ye any meat?**

**20:26** *within*: inside. **20:27** *reach hither*: put here. **21:1** *shewed*: revealed. *on this wise*: in this way. **21:3** *I go a*: I am going. *ship*: boat. **21:5** *have ye any meat*: do you have any fish.

**JESUS' APPEARANCES AFTER HIS RESURRECTION**

- Mary Magdalene . . . . . Mark 16:9–11; John 20:1–18
- The other women at the tomb . . . . . Matthew 28:8–10
- Peter in Jerusalem . . . . . Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5
- The two travelers on the road . . . . . Mark 16:12–13; Luke 24:13–35
- Ten disciples behind closed doors . . . . . Mark 16:14; Luke 24:36–43; John 20:19–25
- All the disciples, with Thomas (excluding Judas Iscariot) . . . . . John 20:26–31; 1 Corinthians 15:5
- Seven disciples while fishing . . . . . John 21:1–14
- Eleven disciples on the mountain . . . . . Matthew 28:16–20
- A crowd of 500 . . . . . 1 Corinthians 15:6
- Jesus' brother James . . . . . 1 Corinthians 15:7
- Those who watched Jesus ascend into heaven . . . . . Luke 24:44–49; Acts 1:3–8

The truth of Christianity rests heavily on the resurrection. If Jesus rose from the grave, who saw him? How trustworthy were the witnesses? Those who claimed to have seen the risen Jesus went on to turn the world upside down. Most of them also died for being followers of Christ. People rarely die for halfhearted belief. These are the people who saw Jesus risen from the grave.

his skepticism, Thomas was still loyal to the believers and to Jesus himself. Some need to doubt before they believe. If doubt leads to questions, the questions lead to answers, and the answers are accepted, then doubt has done good work. It is when doubt becomes stubbornness and stubbornness becomes a prideful lifestyle that doubt harms faith. When you doubt, don't stop there. Let your doubt deepen your faith as you continue to search for the answer.

**20:27** Jesus' resurrected body was unique. It was not the same kind of flesh and blood Lazarus had when he came back to life. Jesus' body was no longer subject to the same laws of nature as before his death. He could appear in a locked room, yet he was not a ghost or apparition; he could be touched and could eat. Jesus' resurrection was *literal* and *physical*—he was not a disembodied spirit.

**20:29** Some people think they would believe in Jesus if they could see a definite sign or miracle. But Jesus says we are

blessed if we can believe without seeing. We have all the proof we need in the words of the Bible and the testimony of believers. A physical appearance would not make Jesus any more real to us than he is now.

**20:30, 31** To understand the life and mission of Jesus more fully, all we need to do is study the Gospels. John tells us that his Gospel records only a few of the many events in Jesus' life on earth. But the Good News includes everything we need to know to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, through whom we receive eternal life.

**21:1f** This chapter tells how Jesus commissioned Peter. Perhaps Peter needed special encouragement after his denial—he may have felt completely worthless. Verses 1–14 set the scene for Jesus' conversation with Peter.

**21:5** "Children" or "lads" was an affectionate greeting, not a term of condescension.

They answered him, No.

<sup>6</sup>And he said unto them, **Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find.** They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. **21:6**  
Luke 5:4-7

<sup>7</sup>Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt *his* fisher's coat *unto him*, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea. <sup>8</sup>And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes. <sup>9</sup>As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. **21:7**  
John 13:23

<sup>10</sup>Jesus saith unto them, **Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.** <sup>11</sup>Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

<sup>12</sup>Jesus saith unto them, **Come and dine.** And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. <sup>13</sup>Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. <sup>14</sup>This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead. **21:9**  
John 18:18

### Jesus talks with Peter (247)

<sup>15</sup>So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, **Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?** **21:15**  
Matt 26:33

He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee.

He saith unto him, **Feed my lambs.**

<sup>16</sup>He saith to him again the second time, **Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?** **21:16**

He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee.

He saith unto him, **Feed my sheep.**

<sup>17</sup>He saith unto him the third time, **Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?** **21:17**

Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. **21:17**  
John 13:38; 16:30

Jesus saith unto him, **Feed my sheep.** <sup>18</sup>Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.** <sup>19</sup>This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me. **21:19**  
John 13:36  
2 Pet 1:14

<sup>20</sup>Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee? <sup>21</sup>Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what *shall* this man *do*? **21:20**  
John 13:23, 25

**21:7** *girt*: wrapped. *did cast himself*: jumped. **21:11** *went up*: went aboard. *great fishes*: large fish. **21:12** *dine*: have breakfast. *durst*: dared. **21:15** *Jonas*: John. **21:18** *verily*: truly. *girdedst thyself*: dressed yourself. *whither*: where.

**21:7** Only John recognized Jesus in the dim of morning light, undoubtedly because Jesus had performed a similar miracle earlier (Luke 5:1-11).

**21:15-17** In this beach scene, Jesus led Peter through an experience that would remove the cloud of his denial. Peter had denied Jesus three times. Three times Jesus asked Peter if he loved him. When Peter answered yes, Jesus told him to feed his sheep. It is one thing to say you love Jesus, but the real test is willingness to serve him. Peter had repented, and here Jesus asked him to commit his life. Peter's life changed when he finally realized who Jesus was. His occupation changed from fisherman to evangelist; his identity changed from impetuous to "rock"; and his relationship to Jesus changed—he was forgiven and fully understood the significance of Jesus' words about his death and resurrection.

**21:15-17** Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved him. The first time Jesus said, "Lovest (Greek *agape*: volitional, self-

sacrificial love) thou me more than these?" The second time, Jesus focused on Peter alone and still used the word translated into Greek, *agape*. The third time, Jesus used the word translated into Greek, *phileo* (signifying affection, affinity, or brotherly love) and asked, in effect, "Are you even my friend?" Each time Peter responded with the word translated into Greek as *phileo*. Jesus doesn't settle for quick, superficial answers. He has a way of getting to the heart of the matter. Peter had to face his true feelings and motives when Jesus confronted him. How would you respond if Jesus asked you "Lovest thou me?" Do you really love Jesus? Are you his friend?

**21:18, 19** This was a prediction of Peter's death by crucifixion. Tradition indicates that Peter was crucified for his faith—upside down, because he did not feel worthy of dying as his Lord did. Despite what his future held, Jesus told Peter to follow him. We may be uncertain and fearful about our future. But if we know God is in control, we can confidently follow Christ.

**21:21, 22** Peter asked Jesus how John would die. Jesus replied that Peter should not concern himself with that. We tend to compare our lives to those of others, whether to rationalize our own level of devotion to Christ or to question God's justice. Jesus responds to us the same way: "What is that to thee? follow thou me."

21:22  
Matt 16:27

<sup>22</sup>Jesus saith unto him, **If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.** <sup>23</sup>Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, **If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?**

21:24  
John 15:27; 19:35  
1 Jn 1:1-3  
3 Jn 1:12

<sup>24</sup>This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.

21:25  
John 20:30

<sup>25</sup>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. Amen.

21:22 tarry: remain. 21:24 which testifieth: who testifies.

### MESSIANIC PROPHECIES AND FULFILLMENTS

For the Gospel writers, one of the main reasons for believing in Jesus was the way his life fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah. Following is a list of some of the main prophecies.

	<i>Old Testament Prophecies</i>	<i>New Testament Fulfillment</i>
1. Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem	Micah 5:2	Matthew 2:1–6 Luke 2:1–20
2. Messiah was to be born of a virgin	Isaiah 7:14	Matthew 1:18–25 Luke 1:26–38
3. Messiah was to be a prophet like Moses	Deuteronomy 18:15, 18, 19	John 7:40
4. Messiah was to enter Jerusalem in triumph	Zechariah 9:9	Matthew 21:1–9 John 12:12–16
5. Messiah was to be rejected by his own people	Isaiah 53:1, 3	Matthew 26:3, 4 John 12:37–43 Acts 4:1–12
6. Messiah was to be betrayed by one of his followers	Psalms 118:22 Psalm 41:9	Matthew 26:14–16, 47–50 Luke 22:19–23
7. Messiah was to be tried and condemned	Isaiah 53:8	Matthew 27:1, 2 Luke 23:1–25
8. Messiah was to be silent before his accusers	Isaiah 53:7	Matthew 27:12–14 Mark 15:3, 4 Luke 23:8–10
9. Messiah was to be struck and spat on by his enemies	Isaiah 50:6	Matthew 26:67; 27:30 Mark 14:65
10. Messiah was to be mocked and insulted	Psalms 22:7, 8	Matthew 27:39–44 Luke 23:11, 35
11. Messiah was to die by crucifixion	Psalms 22:14, 16, 17	Matthew 27:31 Mark 15:20, 25
12. Messiah was to suffer with criminals and pray for his enemies	Isaiah 53:12	Matthew 27:38 Mark 15:27, 28 Luke 23:32–34
13. Messiah was to be given vinegar	Psalms 69:21	Matthew 27:34 John 19:28–30
14. Others were to cast lots for Messiah's garments	Psalms 22:18	Matthew 27:35 John 19:23, 24
15. Messiah's bones were not to be broken	Exodus 12:46	John 19:31–36
16. Messiah was to die as a sacrifice for sin	Isaiah 53:5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12	John 1:29; 11:49–52 Acts 10:43; 13:38, 39
17. Messiah was to be raised from the dead	Psalms 16:10	Matthew 28:1–10 Acts 2:22–32
18. Messiah is now at God's right hand	Psalms 110:1	Mark 16:19 Luke 24:50, 51

**21:23** Early church history reports that John, after spending several years as an exile on the island of Patmos, returned to Ephesus, where he died as an old man near the end of the first century.

**21:25** John's stated purpose for writing his Gospel was to show that Jesus was the Son of God. He clearly and systematically presented the evidence for Jesus' claims. When evidence is

presented in the courtroom, those who hear it must make a choice. Those who read the Gospel of John must also make a choice—is Jesus the Son of God, or isn't he? You are the jury. The evidence has been clearly presented. You must decide. Read John's Gospel and believe!

# ROMANS

## VITAL STATISTICS

### PURPOSE:

To introduce Paul to the Romans and to give a sample of his message before he arrives in Rome

### AUTHOR:

Paul

### ORIGINAL AUDIENCE:

The Christians in Rome

### DATE WRITTEN:

About A.D. 57, from Corinth, as Paul was preparing for his visit to Jerusalem.

### SETTING:

Apparently Paul had finished his work in the east, and he planned to visit Rome on his way to Spain after first bringing a collection to Jerusalem for the poor Christians there (15:23–28). The Roman church was mostly Jewish but also contained a great number of Gentiles.

### KEY VERSE:

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (5:1).

### KEY PEOPLE:

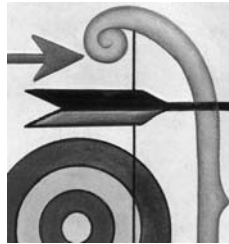
Paul, Phebe

### KEY PLACE:

Rome

### SPECIAL FEATURES:

Paul wrote Romans as an organized and carefully presented statement of his faith—it does not have the form of a typical letter. He does, however, spend considerable time greeting people in Rome at the end of the letter.



KNOWLEDGEABLE and experienced, the district attorney makes his case. Calling key witnesses to the stand, he presents the evidence. After discrediting the testimonies of witnesses for the defense by skillfully cross-examining them, he concludes with an airtight summary and stirring challenge for the jury. The announced verdict is no surprise. “Guilty” states the foreman, and justice is served.

The apostle Paul was intelligent, articulate, and committed to his calling. Like a skilled lawyer, he presented the case for the Gospel clearly and forthrightly in his letter to the believers in Rome.

Paul had heard of the church at Rome, but he had not yet been there, nor had any of the other apostles. Evidently the church had been started by Jews who had come to faith during Pentecost (Acts 2). They had spread the Gospel on their return to Rome, and the church had grown.

Although many barriers separated them, Paul felt a bond with these believers in Rome. They were his brothers and sisters in Christ, and he longed to see them face-to-face. He had never met most of the believers there, yet he loved them. He sent this letter to introduce himself and to make a clear declaration of the faith.

After a brief introduction, Paul presents the facts of the Gospel (1:3) and declares his allegiance to it (1:16, 17). He continues by building an airtight case for the lostness of humanity and the necessity for God’s intervention (1:18–3:20).

Then Paul presents the Good News: Salvation is available to all, regardless of a person’s identity, sin, or heritage. We are saved by *grace* (unearned, undeserved favor from God) through *faith* (complete trust) in Christ and his finished work. Through him we can stand before God justified, “not guilty” (3:21–5:21). With this foundation Paul moves directly into a discussion of the freedom that comes from being saved—freedom from the power of sin (6:1–23), freedom from the domination of the Law (7:1–25), freedom to become like Christ and discover God’s limitless love (8:1–39).

Speaking directly to his Jewish brothers and sisters, Paul shares his concern for them and explains how they fit into God’s plan (9:1–11:12). God has made the way for Jews and Gentiles to be united in the body of Christ; both groups can praise God for his wisdom and love (11:13–36).

Paul explains what it means to live in complete submission to Christ: Use spiritual gifts to serve others (12:3–8), genuinely love others (12:9–21), and be good citizens (13:1–14). Freedom must be guided by love as we build each other up in the faith, being sensitive and helpful to those who are weak (14:1–15:4). Paul stresses unity, especially between Gentiles and Jews (15:5–13). He concludes by reviewing his reasons for writing, outlining his personal plans (15:22–33), greeting his friends, and giving a few final thoughts and greetings from his traveling companions (16:1–27).

As you read Romans, reexamine your commitment to Christ, and reconfirm your relationships with other believers in Christ’s body.



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## THE BLUEPRINT

### A. WHAT TO BELIEVE

(1:1—11:36)

1. Sinfulness of humanity
2. Forgiveness of sin through Christ
3. Freedom from sin's grasp
4. Israel's past, present, and future

Paul clearly sets forth the foundations of the Christian faith. All people are sinful; Christ died to forgive sin; we are made right with God through faith; this begins a new life with a new relationship with God. Like a sports team that constantly reviews the basics, we will be greatly helped in our faith by keeping close to these foundations. If we study Romans carefully, we will never be at a loss to know what to believe.

### B. HOW TO BEHAVE

(12:1—16:27)

1. Personal responsibility
2. Personal notes

Paul gives clear, practical guidelines for the believers in Rome. The Christian life is not abstract theology unconnected with life, but it has practical implications that will affect how we choose to behave each day. It is not enough merely to know the Gospel; we must let it transform our lives and let God impact every aspect of our lives.

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## MEGATHEMES

### THEME

### EXPLANATION

### IMPORTANCE

*Sin*

Sin means refusing to do God's will and failing to do all that God wants. Since Adam's rebellion against God, our nature is to disobey him. Our sin cuts us off from God. Sin causes us to want to live our own way rather than God's way. Because God is morally perfect, just, and fair, he is right to condemn sin.

Each person has sinned, either by rebelling against God or by ignoring his will. No matter what our background or how hard we try to live good and moral lives, we cannot earn salvation or remove our sin. Only Christ can save us.

*Salvation*

Our sin points out our need to be forgiven and cleansed. Although we don't deserve it, God, in his kindness, reached out to love and forgive us. He provides the way for us to be saved. Christ's death paid the penalty for our sin.

It is good news that God saves us from our sin. But in order to enter into a wonderful new relationship with God, we must believe that Jesus died for us and that he forgives all our sin.

*Growth*

By God's power, believers are sanctified—made holy. This means we are set apart from sin, enabled to obey and to become more like Christ. When we are growing in our relationship with Christ, the Holy Spirit frees us from the demands of the Law and from fear of judgment.

Because we are free from sin's control, the Law's demands, and fear of God's punishment, we can grow in our relationship with Christ. By trusting in the Holy Spirit and allowing him to help us, we can overcome sin and temptation.

*Sovereignty*

God oversees and cares about his people—past, present, and future. God's ways of dealing with people are always fair. Because God is in charge of all creation, he can save whomever he wills.

Because of God's mercy, both Jews and Gentiles can be saved. We all must respond to his mercy and accept his gracious offer of forgiveness. Because he is sovereign, let him reign in your heart.

*Service*

When our purpose is to give credit to God for his love, power, and perfection in all we do, we can serve him properly. Serving him unifies all believers and enables them to show love and sensitivity to others.

None of us can be fully Christlike by ourselves—it takes the entire body of Christ to fully express Christ. By actively and vigorously building up other believers, Christians can be a symphony of service to God.

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## A. WHAT TO BELIEVE (1:1—11:36)

Paul begins his message to the Romans by vividly portraying the sinfulness of all humanity, explaining how forgiveness is available through faith in Christ, and showing what believers experience in life through their new faith. In this section, we learn of the centrality of faith to becoming a Christian and to living the Christian life. Apart from faith, we have no hope in life.

### 1. Sinfulness of humanity

#### *Greetings from Paul*

**1** Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,<sup>2</sup> (which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures),<sup>3</sup> concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;<sup>4</sup> and declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:<sup>5</sup> by whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name:<sup>6</sup> among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:<sup>7</sup> to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called *to be* saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### *Paul declares the power of the gospel*

<sup>8</sup>First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.<sup>9</sup>For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;<sup>10</sup>making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.

1:1 separated unto: set apart for. 1:2 afore: beforehand. 1:3 which was made: who was born. 1:9 spirit: whole heart. 1:10 have a prosperous journey: find a way.

1:1  
1 Cor 1:1  
Phil 1:1

1:2  
Rom 3:21  
Titus 1:2

1:3  
Matt 1:1; 22:42  
Rom 9:5  
2 Tim 2:8

1:4  
Acts 13:33  
Rom 8:11

1:5  
Acts 9:15  
Rom 16:26  
Gal 1:16  
Eph 3:8-9

1:8  
Rom 16:19  
1 Thes 1:8

1:9  
Eph 1:16  
Phil 1:8-9  
1 Thes 2:5  
2 Tim 1:3

1:10  
Rom 15:23, 32

**1:1** Paul wrote this letter to the church in Rome. Neither he nor the other church leaders, James and Peter, had yet been to Rome. Most likely, the Roman church had been established by believers who had been at Jerusalem for Pentecost (Acts 2:10) and by travelers who had heard the Good News in other places and brought it back to Rome (for example, Priscilla and Aquila, Acts 18:2; Romans 16:3–5). Paul wrote the letter to the Romans during his ministry in Corinth (at the end of his third missionary journey just before returning to Jerusalem—Acts 20:3; Romans 15:25) to encourage the believers and to express his desire to visit them someday (within three years he would). The Roman church had no New Testament, since the Gospels were not yet being circulated in their final written form. Thus, this letter may well have been the first piece of Christian literature the Roman believers had seen. Written to both Jewish and Gentile Christians, the letter to the Romans is a systematic presentation of the Christian faith.

**1:1** When Paul, a devout Jew who had at first persecuted the Christians, became a believer, God used him to spread the Gospel throughout the world. Although he was a prisoner, Paul did eventually preach in Rome (Acts 28), perhaps even to Caesar himself. Paul's Profile is found in Acts 9.

**1:1** Paul humbly calls himself a servant of Jesus Christ and an apostle ("one who is sent"). For a Roman citizen—which Paul was—to choose to be a servant was unthinkable. But Paul chose to be completely dependent on and obedient to his beloved Master. What is your attitude toward Christ, your Master? Our willingness to serve and obey Jesus Christ enables us to be useful and usable servants to do work for him—work that really matters. Obedience begins as we renounce other masters, identify ourselves with Jesus, discover his will and live according to it, and consciously turn away from conflicting interests, even if these interests have been important to us in the past.

**1:2** Some of the prophecies predicting the Good News of Jesus Christ are Genesis 12:3; Psalms 16:10; 40:6–10; 118:22; Isaiah 11:1ff; Zechariah 9:9–11; 12:10; Malachi 4:1–6.

**1:3–5** Here Paul summarizes the Good News about Jesus Christ who (1) came as a human ("according to the flesh" means by natural descent), (2) was part of the Jewish royal line through David, (3) died and was raised from the dead, and (4) opened the door for God's kindness to be poured out on us. The book of Romans is an expansion of these themes.

**1:3, 4** Paul states that Jesus is the Son of God, the promised

Messiah, and the resurrected Lord. Paul called Jesus a descendant of King David ("of the seed of David") to emphasize that Jesus truly fulfilled the Old Testament Scriptures predicting that the Messiah would come from David's line. With this statement of faith, Paul declared his agreement with the teaching of all Scripture and of the apostles.

**1:5** Christians have both a privilege and a great responsibility. Paul and the apostles received forgiveness ("grace") as an undeserved privilege. But they also received the responsibility to share the message of God's forgiveness with others ("obedience to the faith among all nations"). God also graciously forgives our sins when we believe in him as Lord. In doing this, we are committing ourselves to begin a new life. Paul's new life also involved a God-given responsibility—to witness of God's Good News to the world as a missionary. God may or may not call you to be an overseas missionary, but he does call you (and all believers) to witness and be an example of the changed life Jesus Christ has begun in you.

**1:6, 7** Paul says that those who become Christians are invited by Jesus Christ to (1) become part of God's family, and (2) be holy people ("to be saints," set apart, dedicated for his service). What a wonderful expression of what it means to be a Christian! In being reborn into God's family we have the greatest love and the greatest inheritance. Because of all that God has done for us, we strive to be his holy people.

**1:7** Rome was the capital of the Roman Empire, which had spread over most of Europe, North Africa, and the Near East. In New Testament times, Rome was experiencing a "golden age." The city was wealthy, literary, and artistic. It was a cultural center, but it was also morally decadent. The Romans worshiped many pagan gods, and even some of the emperors were worshiped. In stark contrast to the Romans, the followers of Christ believed in only one God and lived by his high moral standards.

Christianity was also at odds with the Romans' dependence on their military strength. Many Romans were naively pragmatic, believing that any means to accomplish the intended task was good. And for them, nothing worked better than physical might. The Romans trusted in their strong military power to protect them against all enemies. Christians in every age need to be reminded that God is the only permanent source of our security and salvation, and at the same time he is "our Father"!

**1:8** Paul used the phrase "I thank my God through Jesus Christ" to emphasize the point that Christ is the one and only mediator

1:11  
Rom 15:23  
1:13  
John 15:16  
Rom 15:22  
1:14  
1 Cor 9:16  
1:15  
Rom 15:20

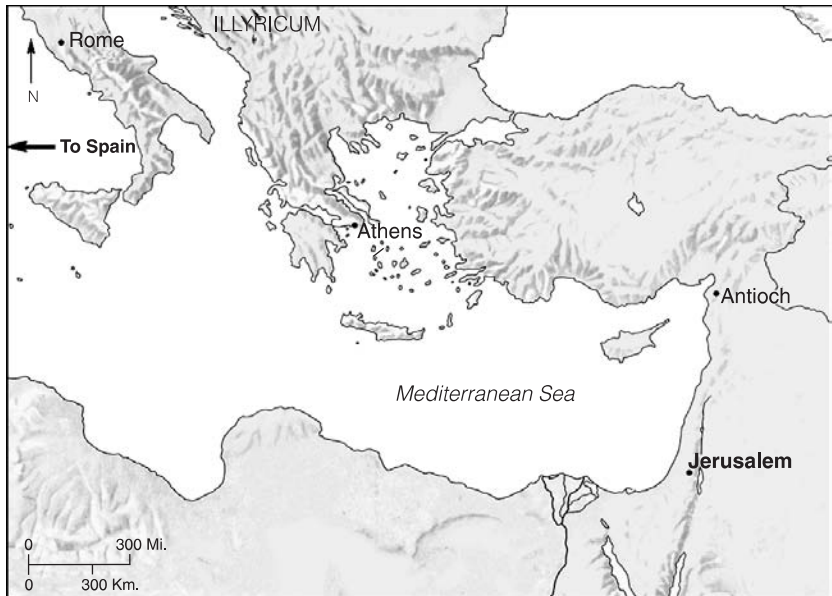
<sup>11</sup>For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; <sup>12</sup>that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. <sup>13</sup>Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.

<sup>14</sup>I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. <sup>15</sup>So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

1:11 *established*: strengthened. 1:13 *purposed*: planned. *let hitherto*: prevented.

### THE GOSPEL GOES TO ROME

When Paul wrote his letter to the church in Rome, he had not yet been there, but he had taken the Gospel "from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum" (15:19). He planned to visit and preach in Rome one day, and hoped to continue to take the Gospel farther west—even to Spain.



between God and man. Through Christ, God sends his love and forgiveness to us; through Christ, we send our thanks to God (see 1 Timothy 2:5).

**1:8** The Roman Christians, at the Western world's political power center, were highly visible. Fortunately, their reputation was excellent; their strong faith was making itself known around the world. When people talk about your congregation or your denomination, what do they say? Are their comments accurate? Would you rather they noticed other features? What is the best way to get the public to recognize your faith?

**1:9, 10** When you pray continually about a concern, don't be surprised at how God answers. Paul prayed to visit Rome so he could teach the Christians there. When he finally arrived in Rome, it was as a prisoner (see Acts 28:16). Paul prayed for a safe trip, and he did arrive safely—after getting arrested, slapped in the face, shipwrecked, and bitten by a poisonous snake. When you sincerely pray, God will answer—although sometimes in timing and in ways you do not expect.

**1:11–13** A reading of the first few verses of Romans relates Paul's ardent desire to visit Rome and the sovereign hand of God that had prevented him from getting there for quite some time. The combination of these two factors—Paul's impassioned desire to go to Rome and God's sovereign "no"—resulted in his sitting down to write this letter to the Romans. This letter is a powerful exposition of the Christian faith and has helped countless millions of believers across the centuries since Paul first penned it to the group of believers in Rome. Perhaps there are some "no's" in our

lives that God is planning to use greatly if we would just faithfully do what lies directly ahead of us instead of worrying about why we didn't get our way.

**1:13** By the end of his third missionary journey, Paul had traveled through Syria, Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia. The churches in these areas were made up mostly of Gentile believers.

**1:14** By "Greeks and Barbarians," Paul was referring to civilized and uncivilized people; "wise and unwise" refers to educated and uneducated people. What was Paul's debt? After his experience with Christ on the road to Damascus (Acts 9), his whole life was consumed with spreading the Good News of salvation. His debt was to Christ for being his Savior, and it was payable to the entire world. He paid his debt of love by proclaiming Christ's salvation to all people—both Jews and Gentiles, across all cultural, social, racial, and economic lines. We owe Christ the same debt of love because he took on the punishment we deserve for our sin. Although we cannot repay him for all he has done, we can demonstrate our gratitude by showing his love to others.

**1:15** Paul was eager to preach the gospel. Is our Christian service done in a spirit of eagerness? Or do we serve out of habit, a feeling of obligation, or perhaps even with a feeling of reluctant duty (much like a child who has to take a bath)? When we fully understand what Christ has done for us and what he offers to others, we will be motivated to share the Good News. Ask God to rekindle that fresh eager attitude that wants to obey him and to tell others about Christ.

<sup>16</sup>For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. <sup>17</sup>For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

### God's anger at sin

<sup>18</sup>For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; <sup>19</sup>because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed *it* unto them. <sup>20</sup>For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse. <sup>21</sup>because that,

**1:19** *manifest in:* plain to. **1:20** *Godhead:* divine nature.

**1:16**  
Acts 3:26  
1 Cor 1:18, 24

**1:17**  
<sup>1</sup>Hab 2:4  
Rom 3:21-22  
Gal 3:11  
Heb 10:38

**1:18**  
Eph 5:6  
Col 3:6

**1:20**  
Job 12:7-9  
Ps 19:1

**1:16** Paul was not ashamed, because his message was the Gospel of Christ, the Good News. It was a message of salvation, it had life-changing power, and it was for everyone. When you are tempted to be ashamed, remember what the Good News is all about. If you focus on God and on what God is doing rather than on your own inadequacy, you won't be ashamed or embarrassed.

**1:16** Why did the message go to the Jews first? They had been God's special people for more than 2,000 years, ever since God chose Abraham and promised great blessings to his descendants (Genesis 12:1-3). God did not choose them because they deserved to be chosen (Deuteronomy 7:7, 8; 9:4-6) but because he wanted to show his love and mercy to them, teach them, and prepare them to welcome his Messiah into the world. He chose them, not to play favorites, but so that they would tell the world about his plan of salvation.

For centuries the Jews had been learning about God by obeying his laws, keeping his feasts, and living according to his moral principles. Often they forgot God's promises and requirements; often they had to be disciplined; but still they had a precious heritage of belief in the one true God. Of all the people on earth, the Jews should have been the most ready to welcome the Messiah and to understand his mission and message—and some of them did (see Luke 2:25, 36-38). Of course, the disciples and the great apostle Paul were faithful Jews who recognized in Jesus God's most precious gift to the human race.

**1:16** Jews and Christians alike stood against the idolatrous Roman religions, and Roman officials often confused the two groups. This was especially easy to do since the Christian church in Rome could have been originally composed of Jewish converts who had attended the Feast of Pentecost in Jerusalem (see Acts 2:1ff). By the time Paul wrote this letter to the Romans, however, many Gentiles had joined the church. The Jews and Gentiles needed to know the relationship between Judaism and Christianity.

**1:17** The Gospel shows us both how righteous God is in his plan for us to be saved and also how we may be made fit for eternal life. By trusting Christ, our relationship with God is made right. "From faith to faith" means that from start to finish God declares us to be righteous because of faith and faith alone. Paul then quotes from Habakkuk 2:4 to show that as we trust God, we are saved; we have life both now and forever.

**1:18** Why is God angry at sinful people? Because they have substituted the truth about him with a lie (1:25). They have stifled the truth God naturally reveals to all people in order to believe anything that supports their own self-centered lifestyles. God cannot tolerate sin because his nature is morally perfect. He cannot ignore or condone such willful rebellion. God wants to remove the sin and restore the sinner—and he is able to, as long as the sinner does not stubbornly distort or reject the truth. But God shows his anger against those who persist in sinning. Make sure you are not pursuing a lie rather than the true God. Don't suppress the truth about him merely to protect your own lifestyle.

**1:18ff** Romans 1:18—3:20 develops Paul's argument that no one can claim by his or her own work or merit to be good in God's sight—not the masses, not the Romans, not even the Jews. All people everywhere deserve God's condemnation for their sin.

**1:18-20** In these verses, Paul answers a common objection to

belief in God: How could a loving God send anyone to hell, especially someone who has never heard the Good News of Jesus? In fact, says Paul, God has revealed himself plainly in the creation to *all* people. And yet people reject even this basic knowledge of God. Also, everyone has an inner sense of what God requires, but they choose not to live up to it. Put another way, people's moral standards are always better than their behavior. If people suppress God's truth ("hold the truth in unrighteousness") in order to live their own way, they have no excuse. They know the truth, and they will have to endure the consequences of ignoring it.

**1:18-20** Some say, "Why do we need missionaries if people can know about God through nature (the creation)?" (1) Although people know that God exists, they suppress that truth by their own wickedness and thus deny him. Missionaries can point out their error. (2) Although people may believe there is a God, they refuse to commit themselves to him. Missionaries can help persuade them. (3) Missionaries can convince people who reject God of the dangerous consequences of their actions. (4) Most importantly, though nature reveals God, people need to be told about Jesus and how through him they can have a personal relationship with God. (5) Missionaries are needed to help the church obey the Great Commission of our Lord (Matthew 28:19, 20).

Knowing that God exists is not enough. People must learn that God is loving. They must understand what he did to show that love to us. They must be shown how to accept his forgiveness of their sins. (See also 10:14, 15.)

**1:19** Does anyone have an excuse for not believing in God? The Bible answers an emphatic *no*. God has revealed what he is like in and through his creation. Every person, therefore, either accepts or rejects God. Don't be fooled. When the day comes for God to judge your response to him, there will be no excuses. Begin today to give your devotion and worship to him.

**1:20** What kind of God does nature reveal? Nature shows us a God of might, intelligence, and intricate detail; a God of order and beauty; a God who controls powerful forces. That is *general* revelation. Through *special* revelation (the Bible and the coming of Jesus), we learn about God's love, forgiveness, and promise of eternal life. God has graciously given us many sources that we might come to believe in him.

**1:20** God reveals his nature and personal qualities through creation, even though nature's testimony has been distorted by the Fall. Adam's sin resulted in a divine curse upon the whole natural order (Genesis 3:17-19); thorns and thistles were an immediate result, and natural disasters have been common from Adam's day to ours. In Romans 8:19-21, Paul says that nature itself is eagerly awaiting its own redemption from the effects of sin (see Revelation 22:3).

**1:21-32** Paul clearly portrays the inevitable downward spiral into sin. First, people reject God; next, they make up their own ideas of what a god should be and do; then they fall into sin—sexual sin, greed, hatred, envy, murder, fighting, lying, bitterness, gossip. Finally, they grow to hate God and encourage others to do so. God does not cause this steady progression toward evil. Rather, when people reject him, he allows them to live as they choose. God gives them up or permits them to experience the natural consequences of their sin. Once caught in the downward spiral,

1:22  
Jer 10:14  
1 Cor 1:20

1:23  
Deut 4:15-19  
Ps 106:20

1:24  
Acts 14:16

1:26  
1 Thes 4:5

when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. <sup>22</sup>Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, <sup>23</sup>and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

<sup>24</sup>Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: <sup>25</sup>who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

<sup>26</sup>For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change

1:21 *vain in their imaginations*: futile in their thinking. 1:23 *uncorruptible*: immortal. 1:26 *up unto vile affections*: over to shameful passions.

## WHAT IS FAITH?

*Faith* is a word with many meanings. It can mean faithfulness (Matthew 24:45). It can mean absolute trust, as shown by some of the people who came to Jesus for healing (Luke 7:2–10). It can mean confident hope (Hebrews 11:1). Or, as James points out, it can even mean a barren belief that does not result in good deeds (James 2:14–26). What does Paul mean when, in Romans, he speaks of “saving faith”?

We must be very careful to understand faith as Paul uses the word because he ties faith so closely to salvation. It is *not* something we must do in order to earn salvation—if that were true, then faith would be just one more deed, and Paul clearly states that human works can never save us (Galatians 2:16). Instead, faith is a gift God gives us *because* he is saving us (Ephesians 2:8). It is God’s grace, not our faith, that saves us. In his mercy, however, when he saves us, he gives us faith—a relationship with his Son that helps us become like him. Through the faith he gives us, he carries us from death into life (John 5:24).

Even in Old Testament times, grace, not works, was the basis of salvation. As Hebrews points out, “it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins” (10:4). God intended for his people to look beyond the animal sacrifices to him, but all too often they instead put their confidence in fulfilling the requirements of the Law—that is, performing the required sacrifices. When Jesus triumphed over death, he cancelled the charges against us and opened the way to the Father (Colossians 2:12–15). Because he is merciful, he offers us faith. How tragic if we turn faith into a deed and try to develop it on our own! We can never come to God through our own faith any more than his Old Testament people could come through their own sacrifices. Instead, we must accept his gracious offer with thanksgiving and allow him to plant the seed of faith within us.

no one can pull himself out. Sinners must trust Christ alone to put them on the path of escape.

**1:21–23** How could intelligent people turn to idolatry? Idolatry begins when people reject what they know about God. Instead of looking to him as the Creator and sustainer of life, they see themselves as the center of the universe. They soon invent “gods” that are convenient projections of their own selfish ideas. These gods may be wooden figures, but they may also be goals. They may even be misrepresentations of God himself—making God in our image. The common denominator is this—idolaters worship the things God made rather than God himself. Is there anything you feel you can’t live without? Do you have a dream you would sacrifice everything to realize? Does God take first place? Do you worship God or idols of your own making?

**1:24–32** These people chose to reject God, and God allowed them to do it. God does not usually stop us from making choices against his will. He lets us declare our supposed independence from him, even though he knows that in time we will become slaves to our own rebellious choices—we will lose our freedom not to sin. Does life without God look like freedom to you? Look more closely. There is no worse slavery than slavery to sin.

**1:25** People tend to believe lies that reinforce their own selfish, personal beliefs. Today, more than ever, we need to be careful about the input we allow to form our beliefs. With TV, music, movies, and the rest of the media often presenting sinful lifestyles and unwholesome values, we find ourselves constantly bombarded by attitudes and beliefs totally opposed to the Bible. Be careful about what you allow to form your opinions. The Bible is the only standard of truth. Evaluate all other opinions in light of its teachings.

**1:26, 27** God’s plan for natural sexual relationships is his ideal for his creation. Unfortunately, sin distorts the natural use of God’s gifts. Sin often means not only denying God but also denying the

way we are made. When people say that any sex act is acceptable so long as nobody gets hurt, they are fooling themselves. In the long run (and often in the short run), sin hurts people—individuals, families, whole societies. Because sex is such a powerful and essential part of what it means to be human, it must be treated with great respect. Sexual desires are of such importance that the Bible gives them special attention and counsels more careful restraint and self-control than with any other desire. One of the clearest indicators of a society or person in rebellion against God is the rejection of God’s guidelines for the use of sex.

**1:26, 27** Homosexuality (to “change” or “leave the natural use of” sex) was as widespread in Paul’s day as it is in ours. Many pagan practices encouraged it. God is willing to receive anyone who comes to him in faith, and Christians should always love and accept others. Yet, homosexuality is strictly forbidden in Scripture (Leviticus 18:22). Homosexuality is considered an acceptable practice by many in our world today—even by some churches. But society does not set the standard for God’s Law. Many homosexuals believe that their desires are normal and that they have a right to express them. God does not encourage us to fulfill all of our desires. Desires that violate his laws must be controlled.

If you have these desires, you can and must resist acting upon them. Consciously avoid places or activities you know will kindle temptations. Don’t underestimate the power of Satan to tempt you or the potential for serious harm if you continue to yield to these temptations. Remember, God can and will forgive sexual sins just as he forgives other sins. Surrender yourself to the grace and mercy of God, asking him to show you the way out of sin and into the light of his freedom and his love. Prayer, Bible study, and loving support of Christians in a Bible-believing church can help you to gain strength to resist these powerful temptations. If you are already deeply involved in homosexual behavior, seek help from a trustworthy, professional Christian counselor.



the natural use into that which is against nature: <sup>27</sup> and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

<sup>28</sup>And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; <sup>29</sup>being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, <sup>30</sup>backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, <sup>31</sup>without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: <sup>32</sup>who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

### God's judgment of sin

**2** Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. <sup>2</sup>But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. <sup>3</sup>And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? <sup>4</sup>Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

<sup>5</sup>But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; <sup>6</sup>who will render to every man according to his deeds: <sup>7</sup>to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: <sup>8</sup>but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, <sup>9</sup>tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; <sup>10</sup>but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: <sup>11</sup>for there is no respect of persons with God.

**1:27** unseemly: shameful. *recompence*: penalty. *meet*: due. **1:28** reprobate: depraved. *convenient*: proper. **1:29** debate: strife. *malignity*: malice. *whisperers*: gossips. **1:30** backbiters: slanderers. *despiteful*: insolent. **1:31** implacable: unforgiving. **1:32** have pleasure in them that: approve of those who. **2:4** forbearance: tolerance. *longsuffering*: patience. **2:5** treasurest: storing. **2:6** render: give. **2:7** patient continuance: perseverance. **2:8** contentious: self-seeking. **2:9** tribulation: trouble. **2:11** respect of persons: partiality.

**1:27**  
Lev 18:22; 20:13  
1 Cor 6:9

**1:30**  
2 Tim 3:2  
**1:31**  
2 Tim 3:3  
**1:32**  
Rom 6:23

**2:1**  
Matt 7:1

**2:4**  
Rom 9:22  
2 Pet 3:9, 15

**2:5**  
Ps 110:5

**2:6**  
Ps 62:12  
Matt 16:27

**2:7**  
Matt 25:46  
2 Tim 4:14

**2:8**  
2 Thes 2:12

**2:11**  
Gal 2:6  
Eph 6:9  
Col 3:25

**1:32** How were these people aware of God's death penalty? Human beings, created in God's image, have a basic moral nature and a conscience. This truth is understood beyond religious circles. Psychologists, for example, say that the rare person who has no conscience has a serious personality disorder, one that is extremely difficult to treat. Most people instinctively know when they do wrong—but they may not care. Some people will even risk an early death for the freedom to indulge their desires now. "I know it's wrong, but I really want it," they say; or, "I know it's dangerous, but it's worth the risk." For such people, part of the "fun" is going against God's Law, the community's moral standards, common sense, or their own sense of right and wrong. But deep down inside they know that sin deserves the punishment of death (6:23).

**2:1ff** When Paul's letter was read in the Roman church, no doubt many heads nodded as he condemned idol worshipers, homosexual practices, and violent people. But what surprise his listeners must have felt when he turned to them and said, "You are just as bad!" Paul was emphatically stressing that *nobody* is good enough to save himself or herself. If we want to avoid punishment and live eternally with Christ, all of us, whether we have been murderers and molesters or whether we have been honest, hardworking, solid citizens, must depend totally on God's grace. Paul is not discussing whether some sins are worse than others. Any sin is enough to cause us to depend on Jesus Christ for salvation and eternal life. We have

all sinned repeatedly, and there is no way apart from Christ to be saved from sin's consequences.

**2:1** Whenever we find ourselves feeling justifiably angry about someone's sin, we should be careful. We need to speak out against sin, but we must do so in a spirit of humility. Often the sins we notice most clearly in others are the ones that have taken root in us. If we look closely at ourselves, we may find that we are committing the same sins. For example, one who gossips may be very critical of others who gossip.

**2:4** It is easy to mistake God's patience for approval of the wrong way we are living. Self-evaluation is difficult, and it is even more difficult to expose our conduct to God and let him tell us where we need to change. But as Christians we must pray constantly that God will point out our sins, so that he can heal them. Unfortunately, we are more likely to be amazed at God's patience with others than humbled at his patience with us.

**2:5–11** Although God does not usually punish us immediately for each sin, his eventual judgment is certain. We don't know exactly when it will happen, but we know that no one will escape that final encounter with the Creator. For more on judgment, see John 12:48 and Revelation 20:11–15.

**2:7** Paul says that those who patiently *do* God's will ("patient continuance in well doing") find eternal life. He is not contradicting his previous statement that salvation comes by faith alone (1:16, 17). We are not saved by good works, but when we commit our lives fully to God, we want to please him and do his will. As such, our good works are a grateful *response* to what God has done, not a prerequisite to earning his grace (see also 3:20).

2:13  
Matt 7:21  
John 13:17  
Jas 1:22-25

2:14  
Acts 10:35

2:16  
Acts 10:42  
Rom 16:25  
2 Tim 2:8

<sup>12</sup>For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; <sup>13</sup>(for not the hearers of the law *are* just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. <sup>14</sup>For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: <sup>15</sup>which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) <sup>16</sup>in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

*God's law is broken*

2:17  
Mic 3:11

<sup>17</sup>Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, <sup>18</sup>and knowest *his* will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; <sup>19</sup>and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, <sup>20</sup>an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.

2:20  
2 Tim 3:5

2:21  
Matt 23:3-4

<sup>21</sup>Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? <sup>22</sup>Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? <sup>23</sup>Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? <sup>24</sup>For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.

2:24  
<sup>1</sup>Isa 52:5  
Ezek 36:20

2:25  
Gal 5:3

<sup>25</sup>For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. <sup>26</sup>Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? <sup>27</sup>And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?

2:15 *the mean while*: alternately. 2:17 *behold*: but if. *retest in*: rely on. 2:22 *commit sacrilege*: rob temples. 2:25 *verily profiteth*: indeed has value. 2:27 *dost transgress*: but break.

**SALVATION'S  
FREEWAY**  
Verses in  
Romans that  
describe the way  
to salvation.

- Romans 3:23 . . . . . Everyone has sinned.
- Romans 6:23 . . . . . The penalty for our sin is death.
- Romans 5:8 . . . . . Jesus Christ died for sin.
- Romans 10:8-10 . . . . . To be forgiven for our sin, we must believe and confess that Jesus is Lord. Salvation comes through Jesus Christ.

**2:12-15** People are condemned not for what they don't know, but for what they do with what they know. Those who know God's written Word and his Law will be judged by them. Those who have never seen a Bible still know right from wrong, and they will be judged because they did not keep even those standards their own consciences dictated. God's Law is written within them.

**2:12-15** If you traveled around the world, you would find evidence in every society and culture of God's moral law. For example, all cultures prohibit murder, and yet in all societies that law has been broken. We belong to a stubborn, sinful race. We know what's right, but we insist on doing what's wrong. It is not enough to know what's right; we must also do it. Admit to yourself and to God that you frequently fail to live up to your own standards (much less to God's standards). That's the first step to forgiveness and healing.

**2:17ff** Paul continues to argue that all stand guilty before God. After describing the fate of the unbelieving, pagan Gentiles, he moves to admonish God's people. Despite their knowledge of God's will, they are guilty because they, too, have refused to live by it. Those of us who have grown up in Christian families may know what God's Word says. But Paul says that if we do not live up to what we know, we are no better off than the heathen.

**2:21-27** These verses are a scathing criticism of hypocrisy. It is much easier to tell others how to behave than to behave properly ourselves. It is easier to say the right words than to allow them to take root in our lives. Do you ever advise others to do something you are unwilling to do yourself? Make sure your actions match your words.

**2:21, 22** Paul explained to the Jews that they needed to teach *themselves*, not others, by their Law. They knew the Law so well that they had learned how to excuse their own actions while criticizing others. But the Law is more than legalistic minimum requirements—it is a guideline for living according to God's will. It is also a reminder that we cannot please God without a proper relationship to him. As Jesus pointed out, even withholding what rightfully belongs to someone else is stealing (Mark 7:9-13), and looking on another person with lustful, adulterous intent is adultery (Matthew 5:27, 28). Before we accuse others, we must look at ourselves and see if sin, in any form, exists within us.

**2:24** If you claim to be one of God's people, your life should reflect what God is like. When you disobey God, you dishonor his name, and people may even speak evil of God because of you. What do people think about God from watching your life?

**2:25-29** "Circumcision" refers to God's special covenant with his people, and it was a requirement for all Jewish men (Genesis 17:9-14). According to Paul, being a Jew (being circumcised) meant nothing if the person didn't obey God's laws. On the other hand, the Gentiles (the uncircumcised) would receive God's love and approval if they obeyed God's laws. Paul goes on to explain that a "real Jew" (one who pleases God) is not someone who has been circumcised (a Jew "outwardly") but someone whose heart is right with God and obeys him (a Jew "inwardly").

<sup>28</sup>For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: <sup>29</sup>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.

*God remains faithful*

**3** What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit *is there* of circumcision? <sup>2</sup>Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

<sup>3</sup>For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? <sup>4</sup>God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

<sup>5</sup>But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? *Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance?* (I speak as a man) <sup>6</sup>God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world? <sup>7</sup>For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner? <sup>8</sup>And not *rather*, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just.

*All people are sinners*

<sup>9</sup>What then? are we better *than they*? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; <sup>10</sup>as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: <sup>11</sup>there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. <sup>12</sup>They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. <sup>13</sup>Their throat *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips: <sup>14</sup>whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness: <sup>15</sup>their feet *are* swift to shed blood: <sup>16</sup>destruction and misery *are* in their ways: <sup>17</sup>and the way of peace have they not known: <sup>18</sup>there is no fear of God before their eyes.

**3:2** chiefly: first of all. **oracles:** very words. **3:3 faith:** faithfulness. **3:4 sayings:** words. **3:8** whose damnation: their condemnation. **3:9** in no wise: not at all. **3:12 unprofitable:** worthless. **3:13 sepulchre:** tomb.

**2:28**  
Matt 3:9  
John 8:39  
Gal 6:15  
**2:29**  
Deut 30:6  
John 5:44  
Rom 7:6  
2 Cor 3:6; 10:18  
Phil 3:3  
Col 2:11  
1 Pet 3:4  
**3:2**  
Deut 4:7-8  
Ps 147:19-20  
Acts 7:38  
**3:4**  
<sup>1</sup>Ps 51:4  
**3:5**  
Rom 5:8  
**3:7**  
Rom 9:19  
**3:8**  
Rom 6:1  
**3:9**  
Rom 1:18-2:24  
**3:10-12**  
<sup>1</sup>Pss 14:1-3; 53:1-3  
**3:13**  
<sup>1</sup>Pss 5:9; 140:3  
**3:14**  
<sup>1</sup>Ps 10:7  
**3:15-17**  
<sup>1</sup>Isa 59:7-8  
**3:18**  
<sup>1</sup>Ps 36:1

**2:28, 29** To be a Jew meant you were in God's family, an heir to all his promises. Yet Paul made it clear that membership in God's family is based on internal, not external, qualities. All whose hearts are right with God are real Jews—that is, part of God's family (see also Galatians 3:7). Attending church or being baptized, confirmed, or accepted for membership is not enough, just as circumcision was not enough for the Jews. What God desires is our devotion and obedience. (See also Deuteronomy 10:16; Jeremiah 4:4 for more on "circumcising the heart.")

**3:1ff** In this chapter Paul contends that everyone stands guilty before God. Paul has dismantled the common excuses of people who refuse to admit they are sinners: (1) "There is no God" or "I follow my conscience"—1:18-32; (2) "I'm not as bad as other people"—2:1-16; (3) "I'm a church member" or "I'm a religious person"—2:17-29. No one will be exempt from God's judgment of sin. Every person must accept the fact that he or she is sinful and condemned by God. Only then can we understand and receive God's wonderful gift of salvation.

**3:1ff** What a depressing picture Paul is painting! All of us—pagan Gentiles, humanitarians, and religious people—are condemned by our own actions. The Law, which God gave to show the way to live, holds up our evil deeds to public view. Is there any hope for us? Yes, says Paul. The Law condemns us, it is true, but the Law is not the basis of our hope. God himself is. He, in his righteousness and wonderful love, offers us eternal life. We receive our salvation not through the Law but through faith in Jesus Christ. We do not—cannot—earn it; we accept it as a gift from our loving heavenly Father. In fact, as Paul notes at the very end of the chapter and develops in chapter 4, this was originally the point of the Law.

**3:2** The Jewish nation had many advantages. (1) They were entrusted with God's Law (the "oracles" or utterances of God, Exodus 19-20; Deuteronomy 4:8). (2) They were the race through whom the Messiah came to earth (Isaiah 11:1-10; Matthew 1:1-17). (3) They were the beneficiaries of covenants with God himself (Genesis 17:1-16; Exodus 19:3-6). But these

privileges did not make them better than anyone else (see 3:9). In fact, because of them the Jews were even more responsible to live up to God's requirements.

**3:4** This promise that God's words will always prove true ("be justified in thy sayings"), no matter what anyone says or does, is both a comfort and a challenge. It is a comfort to have a solid and unchanging foundation on which to build our lives. It is a challenge to make the changes that God's words require. If you have been struggling with habits, attitudes, or ideas that do not agree with God's words, a fresh recognition that God has spoken to you in the Bible will help you toward change.

**3:5-8** Some may think they don't have to worry about sin because (1) it's God's job to forgive; (2) God is so loving, he won't judge us; (3) sin isn't so bad—it teaches valuable lessons, or (4) we need to stay in touch with the culture around us. It is far too easy to take God's grace for granted. But God cannot overlook sin. Sinners, no matter how many excuses they make, will have to answer to God for their sin.

**3:10-12** Paul is referring to Psalm 14:1-3. "There is none righteous" means "no one is innocent." Every person is valuable in God's eyes, because God created us in his image, and he loves us; but no one is righteous (that is, no one can earn right standing with God). Though we are valuable, we have fallen into sin. But God, through Jesus his Son, has redeemed us and offers to forgive us if we return to him in faith.

**3:10-18** Paul uses these Old Testament references to show that humanity in general, in its present sinful condition, is unacceptable before God. Have you ever thought to yourself, "Well, I'm not too bad. I'm a pretty good person"? Look at these verses and see if any of them apply to you. Have you ever lied? Have you ever hurt someone's feelings by your words or tone of voice? Are you bitter toward someone? Do you become angry with those who strongly disagree with you? In thought, word, and deed, you, like everyone else in the world, stand guilty before God. We must remember who we are in his sight—alienated sinners. Don't deny that you are a sinner. Instead, allow your desperate need to point you toward Christ.

**3:19**  
Rom 2:12  
**3:20**  
Ps 143:2  
Rom 4:15; 7:7  
Gal 2:16; 3:11

<sup>19</sup>Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. <sup>20</sup>Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

**2. Forgiveness of sin through Christ**

**3:21**  
Rom 1:2, 17; 9:30  
**3:22**  
Rom 4:11; 10:4, 12  
Gal 2:16  
Col 3:11  
**3:24**  
Eph 2:8  
Heb 9:12  
**3:25**  
Lev 16:10  
Heb 9:12-14  
1 Pet 1:19  
1 Jn 4:10

*Christ took our punishment*  
<sup>21</sup>But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; <sup>22</sup>even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: <sup>23</sup>for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; <sup>24</sup>being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: <sup>25</sup>whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; <sup>26</sup>to declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

**3:19** *stopped*: silenced. **3:21** *without*: apart from. *manifested*: made known. **3:25** *propitiation*: sacrifice of atonement.

**CRUCIAL CONCEPTS IN ROMANS**



- ELECTION . . . . . God's choice of an individual or group for a specific purpose or destiny.  
Romans 9:10–13
- JUSTIFICATION . . . . . God's act of declaring us "not guilty" for our sins, making us "right" with him.  
Romans 4:25; 5:18
- PROPITIATION . . . . . The removal of God's punishment for sin through the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ.  
Romans 3:25
- REDEMPTION . . . . . Jesus Christ has paid the price so we can go free. The price of sin is death; Jesus paid the price.  
Romans 3:24; 8:23
- SANCTIFICATION . . . . . Becoming more and more like Jesus Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit.  
Romans 5:2; 15:16
- GLORIFICATION . . . . . The ultimate state of the believer after death when he or she becomes like Christ (1 John 3:2).  
Romans 8:18, 19, 30

**3:19** The last time someone accused you of wrongdoing, what was your reaction? Denial, argument, and defensiveness? The Bible tells us the world stands hushed and guilty before Almighty God. No excuses or arguments are left. Have you reached the point with God where you are ready to hang up your defenses and await his decision? If you haven't, stop now and admit your sin to him. If you have, the following verses are truly good news for you!

**3:20, 31** In these verses we see two functions of God's Law. First, it shows us where we go wrong. Because of the Law, we know we are helpless sinners, and we must come to Jesus Christ for mercy. Second, the moral code revealed in the Law can serve to guide our actions by holding up God's moral standards. We do not earn salvation by keeping the Law (no one except Christ ever kept or could keep God's Law perfectly), but we do please God when our lives conform to his revealed will for us.

**3:21–29** After all this bad news about our sinfulness and God's condemnation, Paul now gives the wonderful news. There is a way to be declared not guilty—by trusting Jesus Christ to take away our sins. Trusting means putting our confidence in him to forgive our sins, to make us right with God, and to empower us to live the way he taught us. God's solution is available to all of us regardless of our background or past behavior.

**3:23** Some sins seem bigger than others because their obvious consequences are much more serious. Murder, for example, seems to us to be worse than hatred, and adultery seems worse than lust. But this does not mean that because we do lesser sins we deserve eternal life. All sin makes us sinners, and all sin cuts us off from our holy God. All sin, therefore, leads to death (because it disqualifies us from living with God), regardless of how great or small it seems. Don't minimize "little" sins or overrate "big" sins. They all separate us from God, but they all can be forgiven.

**3:24** "Justified freely" means to be declared not guilty. When a judge in a court of law declares the defendant not guilty, all the charges are removed from his record. Legally, it is as if the person had never been accused. When God forgives our sins, our record is wiped clean. It is as though we had never sinned.

**3:24** Redemption refers to Christ setting sinners free from slavery to sin. In Old Testament times, a person's debts could result in his being sold as a slave. The next of kin could redeem him—buy his freedom. Christ purchased our freedom with his life.

**3:25** Christ is our "propitiation" or sacrifice of atonement. God is justifiably angry at sinners. They have rebelled against him and cut themselves off from his life-giving power. God declares Christ's death as the appropriate, designated sacrifice for our sin. He stands in our place, having paid the penalty of death for our sin, and he completely satisfies God's demands. His sacrifice brings pardon, deliverance, and freedom.

**3:25** What happened to people who lived before Christ came and died for sin? If God condemned them, is he being unfair? If he saved them, was Christ's sacrifice unnecessary? Paul shows that God forgave all human sin at the cross of Jesus. Old Testament believers looked forward by faith to Christ's coming and were saved, even though they did not know Jesus' name or the details of his earthly life. Unlike the Old Testament believers, you know about the God who loved the world so much that he gave his own Son (John 3:16). Have you put your trust in him?

<sup>27</sup>Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. <sup>28</sup>Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. <sup>29</sup>Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: <sup>30</sup>seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. <sup>31</sup>Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

#### Abraham was justified by faith

**4** What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? <sup>2</sup>For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory; but not before God. <sup>3</sup>For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

<sup>4</sup>Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. <sup>5</sup>But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. <sup>6</sup>Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, <sup>7</sup>saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. <sup>8</sup>Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

<sup>9</sup>Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision *only*, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. <sup>10</sup>How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. <sup>11</sup>And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: <sup>12</sup>and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.

**3:31** establish: uphold. **4:4** reckoned of: counted as. **4:6** imputeth: credits. without: apart from. **4:10** reckoned: credited.

**3:27**  
Rom 2:17; 4:2  
1 Cor 1:29-31  
**3:28**  
Acts 13:39  
**3:29**  
Rom 10:12  
Gal 3:28  
**3:31**  
Matt 5:17  
**4:2**  
1 Cor 1:31  
**4:3**  
<sup>1</sup>Gen 15:6  
Gal 3:6  
Jas 2:23  
**4:4**  
Rom 11:6  
Gal 2:16  
**4:7-8**  
<sup>1</sup>Ps 32:1-2  
2 Cor 5:19  
**4:9**  
Gen 15:6  
Rom 3:30  
**4:11**  
Gen 17:10-11

**3:27, 28** Most religions prescribe specific duties that must be performed to make a person acceptable to God. Christianity is unique in teaching that the good works we do will not make us right with God. No amount of human achievement or progress in personal development will close the gap between God's moral perfection and our imperfect daily performance. Good deeds are important, but they will not earn us eternal life. We are saved only by trusting in what God has done for us (see Ephesians 2:8-10).

**3:28** Why does God save us by faith alone? (1) Faith eliminates the pride of human effort, because faith is not a deed that we do. (2) Faith exalts what God has done, not what people do. (3) Faith admits that we can't keep the Law or measure up to God's standards—we need help. (4) Faith is based on our relationship with God, not our performance for God.

**3:31** This verse can also be translated: "If we are saved by faith, does this mean that we no longer need obey God's laws? Just the opposite! In fact, only when we trust Jesus can we truly obey him." There were some misunderstandings between the Jewish and Gentile Christians in Rome. Worried Jewish Christians were asking Paul, "Does faith wipe out everything Judaism stands for? Does it cancel our Scriptures, put an end to our customs, declare that God is no longer working through us?" (This is essentially the question used to open chapter 3.) "Absolutely not!" says Paul. When we understand the way of salvation through faith, we understand the Jewish religion better. We know why Abraham was chosen, why the Law was given, why God worked patiently with Israel for centuries. Faith does not wipe out the Old Testament. Rather, it makes God's dealings with the Jewish people understandable. In chapter 4, Paul will expand on this theme (see also 5:20, 21; 8:3, 4; 13:9, 10; Galatians 3:24-29; and 1 Timothy 1:8 for more on this concept).

**4:1-3** The Jews were proud to be called children of Abraham. Paul used Abraham as a good example of someone who was saved by faith. By emphasizing faith, Paul was not saying God's laws are unimportant (4:13), but that it is impossible to be saved simply by obeying them. For more about Abraham, see his Profile in Genesis 18, p. 31.

**4:4** This verse means that if a person could earn right standing

with God by being good, the granting of that gift wouldn't be a free act; it would be an obligation. Our self-reliance is futile; all we can do is cast ourselves on God's mercy and grace.

**4:5** Some people, when they learn that we are saved by God through faith, start to worry. "Do I have enough faith?" they wonder. "Is my faith strong enough to save me?" These people miss the point. It is Jesus Christ who saves us, not our feelings or actions, and he is strong enough to save us no matter how weak our faith is. Jesus offers us salvation as a gift, because he loves us, not because we have earned it through our powerful faith. What, then, is the role of faith? Faith is believing and trusting in Jesus Christ, reaching out to accept his wonderful gift of salvation.

**4:6-8** What can we do to get rid of guilt? King David was guilty of terrible sins—adultery, murder, lying—and yet he experienced the joy of forgiveness. We, too, can have this joy when we (1) quit denying our guilt and recognize we have sinned, (2) admit our guilt to God and ask his forgiveness, and (3) let go of our guilt and believe that God has forgiven us. This can be difficult when a sin has taken root and grown over many years, when it is very serious, or when it involves others. We must remember that Jesus is willing and able to forgive every sin. In view of the tremendous price he paid on the cross, it is arrogant to think any of our sins are too great for him to forgive. Even though our faith is weak, our conscience is sensitive, and our memory haunts us, God's Word declares that sins confessed are sins forgiven (1 John 1:9).

**4:10** Circumcision was an outward sign and seal for the Jews that they were a people special to God. Circumcision of all Jewish boys set the Jewish people apart from the nations who worshipped other gods; thus, it was a very important ceremony. God gave the blessing and the command for this ceremony to Abraham (Genesis 17:9-14).

**4:10-12** Rituals did not earn any reward for Abraham; he had been blessed long before the circumcision ceremony was introduced. Abraham found favor with God by faith alone, before he was circumcised. Genesis 12:1-3 tells of God's call to Abraham when he was 75 years old; the circumcision ceremony was introduced when he was 99 (Genesis 17:1-14). Ceremonies and rituals serve as reminders of our faith, and they instruct new and young-



4:13  
Gen 18:18;  
22:17-18  
Gal 3:29

4:14  
Gal 3:18

4:15  
Rom 3:20; 7:12  
1 Cor 15:55-56  
Gal 3:10

4:16  
Gal 3:7

4:17  
Gen 17:5  
Isa 48:13  
John 5:21  
1 Cor 1:28

4:18  
Gen 15:5

4:19  
Gen 17:17; 18:11  
Heb 11:11

4:22  
Gen 15:6  
Rom 4:3

4:24  
1 Pet 1:21

4:25  
Isa 53:4-5  
Rom 8:30  
1 Cor 15:17  
2 Cor 5:15  
1 Pet 1:21

5:2  
Eph 2:18; 3:12

5:3  
Matt 5:12

<sup>13</sup>For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, *was* not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. <sup>14</sup>For if they which are of the law *be* heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: <sup>15</sup>because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, *there is* no transgression.

<sup>16</sup>Therefore *it is* of faith, that *it might be* by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, <sup>17</sup>(as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, *even* God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

<sup>18</sup>Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. <sup>19</sup>And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: <sup>20</sup>he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; <sup>21</sup>and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. <sup>22</sup>And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

<sup>23</sup>Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; <sup>24</sup>but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; <sup>25</sup>who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

### Faith brings joy

**5** Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: <sup>2</sup>by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

<sup>3</sup>And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh

4:14 *is made void*: has no value. 4:17 *quickeneth*: gives life to. 4:20 *staggered*: wavered. 4:22 *imputed*: credited. 4:25 *offences*: sins.

ger believers. But we should not think that they give us any special merit before God. They are outward signs and seals that demonstrate inner belief and trust. The focus of our faith should be on Christ and his saving work, not on our own actions.

**4:16** Paul explains that Abraham pleased God through his faith alone, before he ever heard about the rituals that would become so important to the Jewish people. We too are saved by faith plus nothing. It is not by loving God and doing good that we are saved; neither is it by faith plus love or faith plus good works. We are saved only through faith in Christ, trusting him to forgive all our sins. For more on Abraham, see his Profile in Genesis 18, p. 31.

**4:17** The promise (or covenant) God gave Abraham said that Abraham would be the father of many nations (Genesis 17:2-4) and that the entire world would be blessed through him (Genesis 12:3). This promise was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Jesus was from Abraham's line, and truly the whole world was blessed through him.

**4:21** Abraham never doubted that God would fulfill his promise. His life was marked by mistakes, sins, and failures, as well as by wisdom and goodness, but he consistently trusted God. His faith was strengthened by the obstacles he faced, and his life was an example of faith in action. If he had looked only at his own resources for subduing Canaan and founding a nation, he would have given up in despair. But Abraham looked to God, obeyed him, and waited for God to fulfill his word.

**4:25** When we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior, an exchange takes place. We give Christ our sins, and he forgives us and makes us right with God (see 2 Corinthians 5:21). There is nothing we can do to earn this. Only through Christ can we be made right in God's eyes. What an incredible bargain for us! But sadly, many still choose to pass up this gift to continue "enjoying" their sin.

**5:1-5** These verses introduce a section that contains some difficult concepts. To understand the next four chapters, it helps to keep in mind the two-sided reality of the Christian life. On the one hand, we are complete in Christ (our acceptance with him is secure); on the other hand, we are growing in Christ (we are becoming more and more like him). At one and the same time we have the status of kings and the duties of slaves. We feel both the presence of Christ

and the pressure of sin. We enjoy the peace that comes from being made right with God, but we still face daily problems that often help us grow. If we remember these two sides of the Christian life, we will not grow discouraged as we face temptations and problems. Instead, we will learn to depend on the power available to us from Christ, who lives in us by the Holy Spirit.

**5:1** We are now at peace *with* God, which may differ from peaceful feelings such as calmness and tranquility. Peace with God means that we have been reconciled with him. There is no more hostility between us, no sin blocking our relationship with him. Peace with God is possible only because Jesus paid the price for our sins through his death on the cross.

**5:2** Paul states that, as believers, we now have entered into a place of undeserved privilege ("this grace wherein we stand"). Not only has God declared us not guilty; he has drawn us close to him. Instead of being enemies, we have become his friends—in fact, his own children (John 15:15; Galatians 4:5).

**5:2-5** As Paul states clearly in 1 Corinthians 13:13, faith, hope, and love are at the heart of the Christian life. Our relationship with God begins with *faith*, which helps us realize that we are delivered from our past by Christ's death. *Hope* grows as we learn all that God has in mind for us; it gives us the promise of the future. And God's *love* fills our lives and gives us the ability to reach out to others.

**5:3, 4** For first-century Christians, suffering was the rule rather than the exception. Paul tells us that in the future we will *become*, but until then we must *overcome*. This means we will experience difficulties that help us grow. "Glory in tribulations" means rejoicing in suffering. We rejoice in suffering, not because we like pain or deny its tragedy, but because we know God is using life's difficulties and Satan's attacks to build our character. The problems that we run into will develop our patience—which in turn will strengthen our character, deepen our trust in God, and give us greater confidence about the future. You probably find your patience tested in some way every day. Thank God for those opportunities to grow, and deal with them in his strength (see also James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:6, 7).

patience; <sup>4</sup>and patience, experience; and experience, hope: <sup>5</sup>and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

<sup>6</sup>For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup>For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. <sup>8</sup>But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

<sup>9</sup>Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. <sup>10</sup>For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. <sup>11</sup>And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

#### *Adam and Christ contrasted*

<sup>12</sup>Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: <sup>13</sup>(for until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. <sup>14</sup>Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

<sup>15</sup>But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. <sup>16</sup>And not as *it was* by one that sinned, *so is* the gift: for the judgment *was* by one to condemnation, but the free gift *is* of many offences unto justification. <sup>17</sup>For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

<sup>18</sup>Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life. <sup>19</sup>For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

**5:4** *experience*: character. **5:7** *peradventure*: perhaps. **5:11** *atonement*: reconciliation. **5:14** *similitude*: likeness. *the figure*: a pattern.

**5:5**  
2 Cor 1:22  
Gal 4:6  
Eph 1:13  
Phil 1:20

**5:6**  
Gal 4:4  
Eph 5:2

**5:8**  
John 3:16  
1 Jn 4:10

**5:9**  
Rom 1:18; 2:5, 8

**5:10**  
Rom 8:34  
2 Cor 5:18-19  
Eph 2:3

**5:12**  
Gen 2:17; 3:19  
Rom 6:23  
1 Cor 15:21-22

**5:13**  
Rom 4:15

**5:14**  
1 Cor 15:22, 45

**5:17**  
1 Cor 15:21

**5:18**  
Isa 53:11  
1 Cor 15:22

**5:19**  
Phil 2:8

**5:5, 6** All three members of the Trinity are involved in salvation. The Father loved us so much that he sent his Son to bridge the gap between us (John 3:16). The Father and the Son send the Holy Spirit to fill our lives with love and to enable us to live by his power (Acts 1:8). With all this loving care, how can we do less than serve him completely!

**5:6** We were helpless because we could do nothing on our own to save ourselves. Someone had to come and rescue us. Christ came at exactly the right time in history—according to God's own schedule. God controls all of history, and he controlled the timing, method, and events surrounding Jesus' death.

**5:8** *While we were yet sinners*—these are amazing words. God sent Jesus Christ to die for us, not because we were good enough, but because he loved us so much. Whenever you feel uncertain about God's love for you, remember that he loved you even before you turned to him.

**5:9, 10** The love that caused Christ to die is the same love that sends the Holy Spirit to live in us and guide us every day. The power that raised Christ from the dead is the same power that saved you and is available to you in your daily life. Be assured that, having begun a life with Christ, you have a reserve of power and love to call on each day for help to meet every challenge or trial. You can pray for God's power and love as you need it.

**5:11** God is holy, and he will not be associated with sin. All people are sinful, and all sin deserves punishment. Instead of punishing us with the death we deserve, however, Christ took our sins upon himself and paid the price for them with his own death. Now we can "joy in God." Through faith in *his* work, we become his friends rather than being enemies and outcasts.

**5:12** How can we be declared guilty for something Adam did thousands of years ago? Many feel it isn't fair for God to judge

us because of Adam's sin. Yet each of us confirms our heritage with Adam by our own sins every day. We have the same sinful nature and are prone to rebel against God, and we are judged for the sins *we* commit. Because we are sinners, it isn't fairness we need—it's mercy.

**5:13, 14** Paul has shown that keeping the Law does not bring salvation. Now he adds that breaking the Law is not what brings death. Death is the result of Adam's sin and of the sins we all commit, even if they don't resemble Adam's. Paul reminds his readers that for thousands of years the Law had not yet been explicitly given, and yet people died. The Law was added, he explains in 5:20, to help people see their sinfulness, to show them the seriousness of their offenses, and to drive them to God for mercy and pardon. This was true in Moses' day, and it is still true today. Sin is a deep discrepancy between who we are and who we were created to be. The Law points out our sin and places the responsibility for it squarely on our shoulders. But the Law offers no remedy. When we're convicted of sin, we must turn to Jesus Christ for healing.

**5:14** Adam is a "figure" or "pattern." Adam is the counterpart of Christ. Just as Adam was a representative of created humanity, so is Christ the representative of a new spiritual humanity.

**5:15-19** We are all born into Adam's physical family—the family line that leads to certain death. All of us reap the same results of Adam's sin. We have inherited his guilt, the tendency to sin (a sinful nature), and God's punishment. Because of Jesus, however, we can trade judgment for forgiveness. Christ offers us the opportunity to be born into his spiritual family—the family line that begins with forgiveness and leads to eternal life. If we do nothing, we receive death through Adam; but if we come to God by faith, we receive life through Christ. To which family line do you now belong to?

5:20  
Rom 4:15; 7:8  
Gal 3:19

5:21  
Rom 6:23

6:1  
Rom 3:5-8

6:2  
Rom 8:13  
Col 2:20; 3:3

6:3  
Gal 3:27

6:4  
Eph 4:22-24  
Col 2:12; 3:10

6:5  
Phil 3:10-11  
Col 2:12; 3:1

6:6  
Gal 2:20; 5:24  
Col 2:12

6:7  
1 Pet 4:1

6:9  
Acts 2:24

6:10  
Heb 7:27

<sup>20</sup>Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: <sup>21</sup>that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

**3. Freedom from sin's grasp**

*Sin's power is broken*

**6** What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup>God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? <sup>3</sup>Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup>Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

<sup>5</sup>For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness of his* resurrection: <sup>6</sup>knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. <sup>7</sup>For he that is dead is freed from sin.

<sup>8</sup>Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: <sup>9</sup>knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

<sup>10</sup>For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

6:9 *dominion*: mastery.

**WHAT WE HAVE AS GOD'S CHILDREN**

*What we have as Adam's children*

*What we have as God's children*

Ruin 5:9 .....	Rescue 5:8
Sin 5:12, 15, 21 .....	Righteousness 5:18
Death 5:12, 16, 21 .....	Eternal life 5:17, 21
Separation from God 5:18 .....	Relationship with God 5:11, 19
Disobedience 5:12, 19 .....	Obedience 5:19
Judgment 5:18 .....	Deliverance 5:10, 11
Law 5:20 .....	Grace 5:20

**5:20** As a sinner, separated from God, you see his Law from below, as a ladder to be climbed to get to God. Perhaps you have repeatedly tried to climb it, only to fall to the ground every time you have advanced one or two rungs. Or perhaps the sheer height of the ladder seems so overwhelming that you have never even started up. In either case, what relief you should feel to see Jesus offering with open arms to lift you above the ladder of the Law, to take you directly to God! Once Jesus lifts you into God's presence, you are free to obey—out of love, not necessity, and through God's power, not your own. You know that if you stumble, you will not fall back to the ground. Instead, you will be caught and held in Jesus' loving arms.

**6:1—8:39** This section deals with *sanctification*—the change God makes in our lives as we grow in the faith. Chapter 6 explains that believers are free from sin's control. Chapter 7 discusses the continuing struggle believers have with sin. Chapter 8 describes how we can have victory over sin.

**6:1, 2** If God loves to forgive, why not give him more to forgive? If forgiveness is guaranteed, do we have the freedom to sin as much as we want? Paul's forceful answer is *no!* Such an attitude—deciding ahead of time to take advantage of God—shows that a person does not understand the seriousness of sin. God's forgiveness does not make sin less serious; his Son's death for sin shows us the dreadful seriousness of sin. Jesus paid with his life so we could be forgiven. The availability of God's mercy must not become an excuse for careless living and moral laxness.

**6:1—4** In the church in Paul's day, immersion was the usual form of baptism—that is, new Christians were completely "buried" in water. They understood baptism to symbolize the death and burial of the old way of life. Coming up out of the water symbolized resurrection to a new life with Christ. If we think of our old, sinful

life as dead and buried, we have a powerful motive to resist sin. We can consciously choose to treat the desires and temptations of the old nature as if they were dead. Then we can continue to enjoy our wonderful new life with Jesus (see Galatians 3:27 and Colossians 3:1–4 for more on this concept).

**6:5ff** We can enjoy our new life in Christ because we are united ("planted") with him in his death and resurrection. Our evil desires, our bondage to sin, and our love of sin died with him. Now, united by faith with him in his resurrection life, we have unbroken fellowship with God and freedom from sin's hold on us. For more on the difference between our new life in Christ and our old sinful nature, read Ephesians 4:21–24 and Colossians 3:3–15.

**6:6, 7** The power and penalty of sin died with Christ on the cross. Our "old man," our sinful nature, died once and for all, so we are freed from its power. The "body of sin" is not the human body but our rebellious, sin-loving nature inherited from Adam. Though we often willingly cooperate with our sinful nature, it is not us but the sin in us that is evil. And it is the power of sin at work in our life that is defeated. Paul has already stated that through faith in Christ we stand acquitted, "not guilty" before God. Here Paul emphasizes that we need no longer live under sin's power. God does not take us out of the world or make us robots—we will still feel like sinning, and sometimes we will sin. The difference is that before we were saved we were slaves to our sinful nature, but now we can choose to live for Christ (see Galatians 2:20).

**6:8, 9** Because of Christ's death and resurrection, his followers need never fear death. This frees us to fellowship with him and to do his will. This will affect all our activities—work and worship, play and Bible study, quiet times, and times caring for others. When you know that you don't have to fear death, you will experience a new vigor in life.

<sup>11</sup>Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. <sup>12</sup>Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. <sup>13</sup>Neither yield ye your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness unto God. <sup>14</sup>For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

**6:11**  
Rom 7:4  
Col 2:20; 3:3

**6:13**  
Rom 12:1  
2 Cor 5:14

**6:14**  
Rom 7:4, 6; 8:2, 12  
Gal 5:18  
1 Jn 3:16

*Slaves to righteousness*

<sup>15</sup>What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. <sup>16</sup>Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? <sup>17</sup>But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. <sup>18</sup>Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

**6:16**  
John 8:34  
2 Pet 2:19

**6:17**  
2 Tim 1:13

**6:18**  
John 8:32

**6:21**  
Rom 7:5; 8:6, 13

**6:22**  
John 8:32  
Rom 8:2

**6:23**  
Matt 25:46  
John 3:16; 17:2  
Rom 5:21  
Gal 6:8

<sup>19</sup>I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

<sup>20</sup>For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. <sup>21</sup>What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things *is* death. <sup>22</sup>But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. <sup>23</sup>For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*No longer bound to the law*

**7** Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? <sup>2</sup>For the woman which hath an husband is

**6:11** reckon: count. **6:17** doctrine: teaching. **6:19** after the manner of men: in human terms. *infirmity*: weakness. **7:1** dominion: authority.

**7:2**  
1 Cor 7:39

**6:11** “Reckon” or count yourselves dead to sin means we should regard our old sinful nature as dead and unresponsive to sin. Because of our union and identification with Christ, we no longer want to pursue our old plans, desires, and goals. Now we want to live for the glory of God. As we start this new life, the Holy Spirit will help us become all that Christ wants us to be.

**6:12** How can we keep this command to not let sin reign in us, that is, not let it control the way we live? We can take the following steps: (1) Identify our personal weaknesses, (2) recognize the things that tempt us, (3) stay away from sources of temptation, (4) practice self-restraint, (5) consciously invest our time in good habits and service, and (5) lean on God’s strength and grace.

**6:13** When Paul uses the term “instruments of unrighteousness,” he uses a word that can refer to a tool or a weapon. Our skills, capabilities, and bodies can serve many purposes, good or bad. In sin, every part of our bodies are vulnerable. In Christ, every part can be an instrument for service. It is the one to whom we offer our service that makes the difference. We are like lasers that can burn destructive holes in steel places or do delicate cataract surgery. Will you give yourself completely to God, asking him to put you to good use for his glory?

**6:14, 15** If we’re no longer under the Law but under grace, are we now free to sin and disregard the Ten Commandments? Paul says, “Of course not.” When we were under the Law, sin was our master—the Law does not justify us or help us overcome sin. But now that we are bound to Christ, he is our Master, and he gives us power to do good rather than evil.

**6:16–18** In certain skilled crafts, an apprentice works under a “master,” who trains, shapes, and molds his apprentice in the finer points of his craft. All people have a master and pattern themselves after him. Without Jesus, we would have no choice—we would have to apprentice ourselves to sin, and the results would be guilt, suffering, and separation from God. Thanks to Jesus, however, we can now choose God as our Master. Following him, we can enjoy new life and learn how to work for him. Are you still serving your first master, sin? Or have you apprenticed yourself to God?

**6:17** To “obey from the heart” means to give yourself fully to God, to love him “with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind” (Matthew 22:37). And yet so often our efforts to know and obey God’s commands can best be described as “half-hearted.” How do you rate your heart’s obedience? God wants to give you the power to obey him with all your heart.

**6:17** The “form of doctrine” delivered to them is the Good News that Jesus died for their sins and was raised to give them new life. Many believe this refers to the early church’s statement of faith found in 1 Corinthians 15:1–11.

**6:19–22** It is impossible to be neutral. Every person has a master—either God or sin. A Christian is not someone who cannot sin, but someone who is no longer a slave to sin. He belongs to God.

**6:23** You are free to choose between two masters, but you are not free to adjust the consequences of your choice. Each of the two masters pays with his own kind of currency. The currency of sin is eternal death. That is all you can expect or hope for in life without God. Christ’s currency is eternal life—new life with God that begins on earth and continues forever with God. What choice have you made?

**7:1ff** Paul shows that the Law is powerless to save the sinner (7:7–14), the lawkeeper (7:15–22), and even the man with a new nature (7:23–25). The sinner is condemned by the Law; the lawkeeper can’t live up to it; and the man with the new nature finds his obedience to the Law sabotaged by the effects of his old nature. Once again, Paul declares that salvation cannot be found by obeying the Law. No matter who we are, only Jesus Christ can set us free.

**7:2–6** Paul uses marriage to illustrate our relationship to the Law. When a spouse dies, the law of marriage no longer applies. Because we have died with Christ, the Law can no longer condemn us. Since we are united with Christ, his Spirit enables us to produce good deeds for God. We now serve God, not by obeying a set of rules, but out of renewed hearts and minds that overflow with love for him.

7:3  
Luke 16:18  
7:4  
Rom 6:6; 8:2  
Gal 5:18  
Col 2:14  
1 Pet 2:24  
7:5  
Rom 6:21; 8:8  
Gal 5:19-21  
7:6  
2 Cor 3:6  
Gal 5:22  
Phil 3:3  
7:7  
<sup>i</sup>Exod 20:17  
<sup>i</sup>Deut 5:21  
Rom 4:15  
7:8  
Rom 4:15  
7:10  
Lev 18:5  
Rom 10:5  
2 Cor 3:7  
Gal 3:12  
7:11  
Gen 3:13  
Heb 3:13  
7:12  
1 Tim 1:8

bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband. <sup>3</sup>So then if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

<sup>4</sup>Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. <sup>5</sup>For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. <sup>6</sup>But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not *in* the oldness of the letter.

#### God's law reveals sin

<sup>7</sup>What shall we say then? *Is* the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. <sup>8</sup>But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin *was* dead.

<sup>9</sup>For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. <sup>10</sup>And the commandment, which *was ordained* to life, I found *to be* unto death. <sup>11</sup>For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew *me*. <sup>12</sup>Wherefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

<sup>13</sup>Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might

7:2 *loosed*: released. 7:5 *motions of sins*: sinful passions. *were by*: were aroused by. 7:7 *lust*: about coveting. 7:8 *occasion*: opportunity. *wrought*: produced. *concupiscence*: covetous desire.

#### WHAT HAS GOD DONE ABOUT SIN?



#### He has given us

##### New life

6:2,3  
6:4  
6:6

#### Principle

Sin's power is broken.  
Sin-loving nature is buried.  
You are no longer under sin's control.

#### Importance

We can be certain that sin's power is broken.

##### New nature

6:5  
6:11

Now you share his new life.  
Look upon your old self as dead; instead, be alive to God.

We can see ourselves as unresponsive to the old power and alive to the new.

##### New freedom

6:12  
6:13  
  
6:14  
6:16

Do not let sin control you.  
Give yourselves completely to God.  
You are free.  
You can choose your own master.

We can commit ourselves to obey Christ in perfect freedom.

**7:4** When a person “dies” to the old life and accepts Christ as Savior, a new life begins. An unbeliever’s life is centered on his own personal gratification, and he has only his own self-determination as his source of power. By contrast, the center of a Christian’s life is God. God supplies the power for the Christian’s daily living. Believers find that their whole way of looking at the world changes when they come to Christ.

**7:5** “In the flesh” does not mean in our skin and bones but in the mind-set of the “old man” (see 6:6). The “motions of sins” are the sinful passions aroused by the Law. When the Law says, “Thou shalt not,” our old nature rebelled and desired to do that very thing.

**7:6** Some people try to earn their way to God by keeping a set of rules (obeying the Ten Commandments, attending church faithfully, or doing good works), but all they earn for their efforts is frustration and discouragement. However, because of Christ’s sacrifice, the way to God is already open, and we can become his children simply by putting our faith in him. No longer trying to reach God by keeping rules, we can become more and more like Jesus as we live with him day by day. Let the Holy Spirit turn your eyes away from your own performance and toward Jesus. He will free you to serve him out of love and gratitude. This is living “in newness of spirit.”

**7:6** Keeping the rules, laws, and customs of Christianity doesn’t save us. Even if we could keep our actions pure, we would still be doomed because our hearts and minds are perverse and rebel-

lous. Like Paul, we can find no relief in the synagogue or church until we look to Jesus Christ himself for our salvation—which he gives us freely. When we do come to Jesus, we are flooded with relief and gratitude. Will we keep the rules any better? Most likely, but we will be motivated by love and gratitude not by the desire to get God’s approval. We will not be merely submitting to an external code, but we will willingly and lovingly seek to do God’s will.

**7:9–11** Where there is no law, there is no sin, for people cannot know their actions are sinful unless a law forbids those actions. God’s Law makes people realize that they are sinners, doomed to die, yet it offers no help. Sin is real, and it is dangerous. Imagine a sunny day at the beach. You plunge into the surf, then you notice a sign on the pier: “No swimming. Sharks in water.” Your day is ruined. Is it the sign’s fault? Are you angry with the people who put it up? The Law is like the sign. It is essential, and we are grateful for it—but it doesn’t get rid of the sharks.

**7:11** Sin deceives people by misusing the Law. In the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3), the serpent deceived Eve by taking her focus off the freedom she had and putting it on the one restriction God had made. Ever since then, we have all been rebels. Sin looks good to us precisely because God has said it is wrong. When we are tempted to rebel, we need to look at the Law from a wider perspective—in the light of God’s grace and mercy. If we focus on his great love for us, we will understand that he only restricts us from actions and attitudes that ultimately will harm us.



appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

### *The struggle within*

<sup>14</sup>For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. <sup>15</sup>For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. <sup>16</sup>If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good. <sup>17</sup>Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

<sup>18</sup>For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not. <sup>19</sup>For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. <sup>20</sup>Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

<sup>21</sup>I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. <sup>22</sup>For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: <sup>23</sup>but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. <sup>24</sup>O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? <sup>25</sup>I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

### *The Holy Spirit frees us from sin*

**8** *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. <sup>2</sup>For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. <sup>3</sup>For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: <sup>4</sup>that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

<sup>5</sup>For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after

**7:14** *carnal*: unspiritual. **7:15** *allow*: understand.

**7:14**  
1 Kgs 21:20-25  
Rom 3:9; 6:6

**7:15**  
Gal 5:17

**7:18**  
Gen 6:5; 8:21  
John 3:6  
Rom 8:3

**7:21**  
Rom 8:2

**7:22**  
Pss 1:2; 40:8

**7:23**  
Gal 5:17  
Jas 4:1  
1 Pet 2:11

**7:24**  
Rom 6:6; 8:2

**7:25**  
Rom 6:16, 22  
1 Cor 15:57  
2 Cor 2:14

**8:2**  
Rom 8:11  
2 Cor 3:6  
Gal 2:19; 5:1

**8:3**  
Acts 13:38  
2 Cor 5:21  
Phil 2:7  
Heb 2:14; 4:15

**8:4**  
Gal 5:16, 25

**8:5**  
Gal 5:19-22

**7:15** Paul gives three lessons that he learned in trying to deal with his sinful desires. (1) Knowledge of the rules is not the answer (7:9). Paul felt fine as long as he did not understand what the Law demanded. When he learned the truth, he knew he was doomed. (2) Self-determination (struggling in one's own strength) does not succeed (7:15). Paul found himself sinning in ways that weren't even attractive to him. (3) Becoming a Christian does not stamp out all sin and temptation from one's life (7:22–25).

Being born again takes a moment of faith, but becoming like Christ is a lifelong process. Paul likens Christian growth to a strenuous race or fight (1 Corinthians 9:24–27; 2 Timothy 4:7). Thus, as Paul has been emphasizing since the beginning of this letter, *no one* in the world is innocent; no one deserves to be saved—not the pagan who doesn't know God's laws, not the person who knows them and tries to keep them. All of us must depend totally on the work of Christ for our salvation. We cannot earn it by our good behavior.

**7:15** This is more than the cry of one desperate man—it describes the experience of any Christian struggling against sin or trying to please God by keeping rules and laws without the Spirit's help. We must never underestimate the power of sin. We must never attempt to fight it in our own strength. Satan is a crafty tempter, and we have an amazing ability to make excuses. Instead of trying to overcome sin with our human will-power, we must take hold of the tremendous power of Christ that is available to us. This is God's provision for victory over sin—he sends the Holy Spirit to live in us and give us power. And when we fall, he lovingly reaches out to help us up.

**7:23–25** The sin deep within us is sometimes called the “flesh” or the “law in our members.” This is our vulnerability to sin; it refers to everything within us that is more loyal to our old way of selfish living than to God.

**7:23–25** There is great tension in daily Christian experience. The conflict is that we agree with God's commands but cannot do them. As a result, we are painfully aware of our sin. This inward struggle with sin was as real for Paul as it is for us. From Paul we

learn what to do about it. Whenever he felt overwhelmed by the spiritual battle, he would return to the beginnings of his spiritual life, remembering how he had been freed from sin by Jesus Christ. When we feel confused and overwhelmed by sin's appeal, let us claim the freedom Christ gave us. His power can lift us to victory.

**8:1** The “flesh” as used throughout this chapter refers not to our human bodies, but to the principle and power of sin. Sin is present and often operating in our body, but not to be equated with the body (see 6:6).

**8:1** “Not guilty; let him go free”—what would those words mean to you if you were on death row? The fact is that the whole human race *is* on death row, justly condemned for repeatedly breaking God's holy Law. Without Jesus we would have no hope at all. But thank God! He has declared us not guilty and has offered us freedom from sin and power to do his will.

**8:2** This Spirit of life is the Holy Spirit. He was present at the creation of the world (Genesis 1:2), and he is the power behind the rebirth of every Christian. He gives us the power we need to live the Christian life. For more about the Holy Spirit, read the notes on John 3:6; Acts 1:4, 5; 1:5.

**8:3** Jesus gave himself as a sacrifice for our sins. In Old Testament times, animal sacrifices were continually offered at the Temple. The sacrifices showed the Israelites the seriousness of sin: Blood had to be shed before sins could be pardoned (see Leviticus 17:11). But animal blood could not really remove sins (Hebrews 10:4). The sacrifices could only point to Jesus' sacrifice, which paid the penalty for all sins.

**8:5, 6** Paul divides people into two categories—those who are dominated by their sinful nature (to be “carnally minded” is to have a mind-set confirmed by the sinful nature), and those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit. All of us would be in the first category if Jesus hadn't offered us a way out. Once we have said yes to Jesus, we will want to continue following him, because his way brings life and peace. Daily we must consciously choose to center our lives on God. Use the Bible to discover God's guidelines, and then follow them. In every perplexing situation ask

**8:9**John 14:17-18  
Gal 4:6  
Phil 1:19  
1 Pet 1:11**8:10**John 14:20; 15:5;  
17:23, 26  
2 Cor 13:5  
Col 1:26-27**8:11**

1 Cor 6:14; 15:45

**8:13**Gal 6:8  
Col 3:5**8:14**John 1:12  
Gal 3:26  
Rev 21:7**8:15**

Gal 4:5-6

**8:16**2 Cor 1:22  
Eph 1:13**8:17**Gal. 3:29; 4:7  
8:18  
2 Cor 4:17  
Col 3:4  
1 Pet 1:6-7**8:19**2 Pet 3:13  
1 Jn 3:2**8:20**

Gen 3:17-19

**8:22**

Jer 12:24

the Spirit the things of the Spirit. <sup>6</sup>For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. <sup>7</sup>Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. <sup>8</sup>So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

<sup>9</sup>But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. <sup>10</sup>And if Christ *be* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin; but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup>But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

<sup>12</sup>Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. <sup>13</sup>For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. <sup>14</sup>For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

<sup>15</sup>For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. <sup>16</sup>The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: <sup>17</sup>and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together.

### *The future glory*

<sup>18</sup>For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us. <sup>19</sup>For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. <sup>20</sup>For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected *the same* in hope, <sup>21</sup>because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

<sup>22</sup>For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. <sup>23</sup>And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even

**8:6** *carnally*: unspiritually. **8:7** *enmity against*: hostile to. **8:11** *quicken*: give life to. **8:13** *do mortify*: put to death. **8:16** *itself*: himself. **8:18** *reckon*: consider. **8:19** *creature*: creation. *manifestation*: revealing. **8:20** *vanity*: futility.

yourself, "What would Jesus want me to do?" When the Holy Spirit points out what is right, do it eagerly. For more on our sinful nature versus our new life in Christ, see 6:6–8; Ephesians 4:22–24; Colossians 3:3–15.

**8:9** Have you ever worried about whether or not you really are a Christian? A Christian is anyone who has the Spirit of God living in him. If you have sincerely trusted Christ for your salvation and acknowledged him as Lord, then the Holy Spirit has come into your life, and you are a Christian. You won't know the Holy Spirit has come if you are waiting for a certain feeling; you will know he has come because Jesus promised he would. When the Holy Spirit is working within you, you will believe that Jesus Christ is God's Son and that eternal life comes through him (1 John 5:5); you will begin to act as Christ directs (Romans 8:5; Galatians 5:22, 23); you will find help in your daily problems and in your praying (Romans 8:26, 27); you will be empowered to serve God and do his will (Acts 1:8; Romans 12:6ff); and you will become part of God's plan to build up his church (Ephesians 4:12, 13).

**8:11** The Holy Spirit is God's promise or guarantee of eternal life for those who believe in him. The Spirit is in us now by faith, and by faith we are certain to live with Christ forever. See Romans 8:23; 1 Corinthians 6:14; 2 Corinthians 4:14; 1 Thessalonians 4:14.

**8:13** "Mortify the deeds of the body" means to put to death or regard as dead the power of sin in your body (see 6:11 and Galatians 5:24).

**8:14–17** Paul uses adoption to illustrate the believer's new relationship with God. In Roman culture, the adopted person lost all rights in his old family and gained all the rights of a legitimate child in his new family. He became a full heir to his new father's estate. Likewise, when a person becomes a Christian, he gains all the privileges and responsibilities of a child in God's family. One of these outstanding privileges is being led by the Spirit (see Galatians 4:5, 6). We may not always feel like we belong to God, but the Holy Spirit is our witness. His inward presence reminds us of who we are and encourages us with God's love (5:5).

**8:14–17** We are no longer cringing and fearful slaves; instead, we are the Master's children. What a privilege! Because we are God's

children, we share in great treasures as joint-heirs. God has already given us his best gifts: his Son, his Holy Spirit, forgiveness, and eternal life; and he encourages us to ask him for whatever we need.

**8:17** There is a price for being identified with Jesus. Along with being "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ," Paul also mentions the suffering that Christians must face. What kinds of suffering are we to endure? For first-century believers, there was economic and social persecution, and some even faced death. We, too, must pay a price for following Jesus. In many parts of today's world, Christians face pressures just as severe as those faced by Christ's first followers. Even in countries where Christianity is tolerated or encouraged, Christians must not become complacent. To live as Jesus did—serving others, giving up one's own rights, resisting pressures to conform to the world—always exacts a price. Nothing we suffer, however, can compare to the great price Jesus paid to save us.

**8:19–22** Sin has caused all creation ("the creature") to fall from the perfect state in which God created it. It is subject to futility ("vanity") and bondage so that it cannot fulfill its intended purpose. One day all creation will be transformed. Until that time it looks forward to the resurrection of God's children ("the manifestation of the sons of God").

**8:19–22** Christians see the world as it is—physically decaying and spiritually infected with sin. But Christians do not need to be pessimistic, for they have hope for future glory. They look forward to the new heaven and new earth God has promised, and they wait for God's new order that will free the world from sin, sickness, and evil. In the meantime, they go with Christ into the world where they heal people's bodies and souls and fight the evil effects of sin in the world.

**8:23** We will be resurrected with glorified bodies like the body Christ now has in heaven (see 1 Corinthians 15:25–58). We have the "firstfruits," the first installment or down payment of the Holy Spirit as a guarantee of our resurrection life (see 2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5; Ephesians 1:14).

we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body. <sup>24</sup>For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? <sup>25</sup>But if we hope for that we see not, *then* do we with patience wait for *it*.

<sup>26</sup>Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. <sup>27</sup>And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*.

<sup>28</sup>And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his purpose*. <sup>29</sup>For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. <sup>30</sup>Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

*Nothing can separate us from God's love*

<sup>31</sup>What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us? <sup>32</sup>He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

<sup>33</sup>Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth. <sup>34</sup>Who is he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

<sup>35</sup>Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or perse-

**8:26** *infirmities*: weakness. **8:29** *did predestinate*: predestined.

**8:23**  
2 Cor 1:22; 5:5  
Phil 3:21

**8:24**  
2 Cor 5:7  
1 Thes 5:8

**8:26**  
John 14:16

**8:27**  
1 Cor 4:5

**8:28**  
Eph 1:11; 3:11  
2 Tim 1:9

**8:29**  
Eph 1:5  
Col 1:18  
2 Tim 2:19  
Heb 1:6  
1 Pet 1:2

**8:31**  
Ps 118:6

**8:32**  
John 3:16  
Rom 4:25; 5:8

**8:33**  
Isa 50:8

**8:34**  
Ps 110:1  
1 Jn 2:1

**8:35**  
1 Cor 4:11  
2 Cor 11:26-27

**8:24, 25** It is natural for children to trust their parents, even though parents sometimes fail to keep their promises. Our heavenly Father, however, never makes promises he won't keep. Nevertheless, his plan may take more time than we expect. What are we waiting for? New bodies, a new heaven and new earth, rest and rewards, our eternal family and home, the absence of sin and suffering, and being face to face with Jesus! Rather than acting like impatient children as we wait for his will to unfold, we should place our confidence in God's goodness, his wisdom, and his perfect timing.

**8:24, 25** In Romans, Paul presents the idea that salvation is past, present, and future. It is past because we *were* saved the moment we believed in Jesus Christ as Savior (3:21–26; 5:1–11; 6:1–11, 22; 23); our new life (eternal life) began at that moment. And it is present because we *are being* saved; this is the process of sanctification (see the note on 6:1—8:39). But at the same time, we have not fully received all the benefits and blessings of salvation that will be ours when Christ's new Kingdom is completely established. That's our future salvation. While we can be confident of our salvation, we still look ahead with hope and trust toward that complete change of body and personality that lies beyond this life, when we will be like Christ (1 John 3:2).

**8:26, 27** As a believer, you are not left to your own resources to cope with problems. Even when you don't know the right words to pray, the Holy Spirit prays with and for you, and God answers. With God helping you pray, you don't need to be afraid to come before him. Ask the Holy Spirit to plead for you "according to the will of God." Then, when you bring your requests to God, trust that he will always do what is best.

**8:28** God works out all things—not just isolated incidents—for our good. This does not mean that all that happens to us is good. Evil is prevalent in our fallen world, but God is able to turn it around for our long-range good. Note that God is not working to make us happy but to fulfill his purpose. Note also that this promise is not for everybody. It can be claimed only by those who love God and are fitting into God's plans. Those who are "called" are those the Holy Spirit convinces and enables to receive Christ. Such people have a new perspective, a new mind-set on life. They trust in God, not life's treasures; they look to their security in heaven, not on earth; they learn to accept, not resent, pain and persecution because they know God is with them.

**8:29** God's ultimate goal for us is to make us like Christ (1 John 3:2). As we become more and more like him, we discover our true selves, the persons we were created to be. How can we be conformed to his image? By reading and heeding his Word, by studying his life on earth through the Gospels, by spending time in prayer, by being filled with his Spirit, and by doing his work in the world.

**8:29, 30** Some believe these verses mean that before the beginning of the world, God chose certain people to receive his gift of salvation. They point to verses like Ephesians 1:11 which says we are "predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Others believe that God *foreknew* those who would respond to him, and upon those he set his mark (predestined). What is clear is that God's *purpose* for man was not an afterthought; it was settled before the foundation of the world. Mankind is to serve and honor God. If you have believed in him, you can rejoice in the fact that God has always known you. His love is eternal. His wisdom and power are supreme. He will guide and protect you until you one day stand in his presence.

**8:31–34** Do you ever think that because you aren't good enough for God, he will not save you? Do you ever feel as if salvation is for everyone else but you? Then these verses are especially for you. If God gave his Son for you, he isn't going to hold back the gift of salvation! If Christ gave his life for you, he isn't going to turn around and condemn you! He will not withhold anything you need to live for him. The book of Romans is more than a theological explanation of God's redeeming grace—it is a letter of comfort and confidence addressed to you.

**8:34** Paul says that Jesus is interceding for us in heaven. God has acquitted us and removed our sin and guilt, so it is Satan, not God, who accuses us. When he does, Jesus, the advocate for our defense, stands at God's right hand to present our case. For more on the concept of Christ as our advocate, see the notes on Hebrews 4:14; 4:15.

**8:35, 36** These words were written to a church that would soon undergo terrible persecution. In just a few years, Paul's hypothetical situations would turn into painful realities. This passage confirms God's profound love for his people. No matter what happens to us or where we are, we can never be lost to his love. When suffering comes, it should not drive us away from God but help us to identify with him further and allow his love to reach us and heal us.

8:36  
<sup>1</sup>Ps 44:22

8:37  
 John 16:33  
<sup>1</sup>Cor 15:57  
<sup>1</sup>Jn 5:4

8:38  
 John 10:28  
 Col 3:3

9:1  
<sup>1</sup>Tim 2:7

9:3  
 Exod 32:32

9:4  
 Exod 4:22  
 Deut 4:13; 7:6  
 Eph 2:12

9:6  
 Num 23:19  
 Rom 2:28  
 Gal 6:16

9:7  
<sup>1</sup>Gen 21:12  
 Heb 11:18

9:8  
 Gal 3:16; 4:23

9:9  
<sup>1</sup>Gen 18:10, 14

9:10  
 Gen 25:21

9:12  
<sup>1</sup>Gen 25:23

cution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? <sup>36</sup>As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. <sup>37</sup>Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

<sup>38</sup>For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, <sup>39</sup>nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

#### 4. Israel's past, present, and future

##### *God's selection of Israel*

**9** I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, <sup>2</sup>that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. <sup>3</sup>For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: <sup>4</sup>who are Israelites; to whom *pertaineth* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; <sup>5</sup>whose *are* the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ *came*, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

<sup>6</sup>Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they *are* not all Israel, which are of Israel: <sup>7</sup>neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, *are they* all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. <sup>8</sup>That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. <sup>9</sup>For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.

<sup>10</sup>And not only *this*; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, *even* by our father Isaac; <sup>11</sup>(for *the children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) <sup>12</sup>it

8:36 *accounted*: considered. 8:39 *creature*: created thing. 9:3 *accursed*: cursed and cut off. *kinsmen*: people.

#### WARNING SIGNS OF DEVELOPING HARDNESS

Hardening is like a callus or like the tough bone fibers that bridge a fracture. Spiritual hardening begins with self-sufficiency, security in one's self, and self-satisfaction. The real danger is that at some point, repeated resistance to God will yield an actual inability to respond, which the Bible describes as a hardened heart. Insensitivity indicates advanced hardening. Here are some of the warning signs:

##### *Warning Sign*

Disobeying—Pharaoh's willful disobedience led to his hardened heart.

Having wealth and prosperity—Taking God's blessings for granted can cause us to feel as if they were owed to us.

Rebelling and being discontented—Suffering or discomfort can create an attitude that blames God.

Rejecting a deserved rebuke—Rejecting God's gift makes our neck stiff and our heart hard.

Refusing to listen—Refusing to listen leads to a loss of spiritual hearing.

Failing to respond—Listening to God with no intention of obeying produces an inability to obey.

##### *Reference*

Exodus 4:21

Deuteronomy 8:6–14

Psalms 95:8

Proverbs 29:1

Zechariah 7:11–13

Matthew 13:11–15

**8:35–39** These verses contain one of the most comforting promises in all Scripture. Believers have always had to face hardships in many forms: persecution, illness, imprisonment, even death. These could cause them to fear that they have been abandoned by Christ. But Paul explains that it is *impossible* to be separated from Christ. His death for us is proof of his unconquerable love. Nothing can stop his constant presence with us. God tells us how great his love is so that we will feel totally secure in him. If we believe these overwhelming assurances, we will not be afraid.

**8:38** "Principalities" and "powers" are unseen forces of evil in the universe, forces like Satan and his fallen angels (see Ephesians 6:12). In Christ we are super-conquerors, and his love will protect us from any such forces.

**9:1–3** Paul expressed concern for his Jewish "kinsmen" by saying he would willingly take their punishment if that would save them. While the only one who can save us is Christ, Paul showed

a rare depth of love. Like Jesus, he was willing to be a sacrifice for others. How concerned are you for those who don't know Christ? Are you willing to sacrifice your time, money, energy, comfort, and safety to see them come to faith in Jesus?

**9:6** God's promises were made to Abraham. Covenant people, the true children of Abraham, are not just his biological descendants. They are all those who trust in God and in what Jesus Christ has done for them (see also 2:29; Galatians 3:7).

**9:11** The Jews were proud of the fact that their lineage came from Isaac, whose mother was Sarah (Abraham's legitimate wife), rather than Ishmael whose mother was Hagar (Sarah's hand-maiden). Paul asserts that no one can claim to be chosen by God because of his or her heritage or good works. God freely chooses to save whomever he wills. The doctrine of election teaches that it is God's sovereign choice to save us by his goodness and mercy, not by our own merit.

was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. <sup>13</sup>As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

<sup>14</sup>What shall we say then? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? God forbid. <sup>15</sup>For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. <sup>16</sup>So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

<sup>17</sup>For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

<sup>18</sup>Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will *have mercy*, and whom he will he hardeneth.

<sup>19</sup>Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

<sup>20</sup>Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed *it*, Why hast thou made me thus? <sup>21</sup>Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

<sup>22</sup>What if God, willing to shew *his* wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: <sup>23</sup>and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, <sup>24</sup>even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

<sup>25</sup>As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. <sup>26</sup>And it shall come to pass, *that* in the place where it was said unto them, *Ye are* not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God. <sup>27</sup>Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: <sup>28</sup>for he will finish the work, and cut *it* short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. <sup>29</sup>And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

### *Israel's unbelief*

<sup>30</sup>What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. <sup>31</sup>But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. <sup>32</sup>Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; <sup>33</sup>as it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

**9:22** longsuffering: patience. **9:23** afore: beforehand. **9:25** Osee: Hosea. **9:26** children: sons. **9:27** Esaias: Isaiah. crieth: cries out. **9:32** wherefore: why. **9:33** Sion: Zion. of offence: that makes men fall.

**9:13**  
<sup>1</sup>Mal 1:2-3

**9:14**  
 Deut 32:4

**9:16**  
 Eph 2:8

**9:17**  
<sup>1</sup>Exod 9:16

**9:18**  
 Exod 4:21; 14:4  
 Josh 11:20  
 Rom 11:25

**9:20**  
 Isa 29:16; 45:9

**9:21**  
 Jer 18:6  
 2 Tim 2:20

**9:22**  
 Jer 50:25

**9:24**  
 Rom 3:29

**9:25**  
<sup>1</sup>Hos 2:23

**9:26**  
<sup>1</sup>Hos 1:10

**9:27**  
<sup>1</sup>Isa 10:22  
<sup>1</sup>Hos 1:10

**9:28**  
<sup>1</sup>Isa 10:22-23;  
 28:22

**9:29**  
<sup>1</sup>Isa 1:9

**9:30**  
 Gal 2:16  
 Heb 11:7

**9:31**  
 Isa 51:1  
 Rom 10:2-3  
 Gal 5:4

**9:32**  
 Isa 8:14

**9:33**  
<sup>1</sup>Isa 28:16  
 Rom 10:11  
 1 Pet 2:6, 8

**9:12-14** Was it right for God to choose Jacob, the younger, to be over Esau? "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" refers to the nations of Israel and Edom rather than to the individual brothers. He chose Jacob to continue the family line of the faithful. But he did not exclude Esau from knowing and loving him. Keep in mind the kind of God we worship: He is sovereign; he works for our good in everything; he is trustworthy; he will save all who believe in him. When we understand these qualities of God, we know his choices are good, even if we don't understand all his reasons.

**9:16** The fallacy of gaining salvation by human effort remains as strong as ever—people still think good intentions are the key to unlock the door to eternal life. By the time they get to try the lock, they will find that their key does not fit. Others imagine that their efforts are building an invisible ladder to heaven made up of service, family, position, reputation, good work, and desire, although none of these rungs will support a feather. People are so busy trying to reach God that they completely miss the truth that God has already reached down to them. We cannot earn God's mercy—if we could, it would not be mercy.

**9:17, 18** Paul quotes from Exodus 9:16, where God foretold how Pharaoh would be used to declare God's power. Paul used this argument to show that salvation was God's work, not man's. God's judgment on Pharaoh's choice to resist God was to confirm that sin and harden his heart. The consequences of Pharaoh's rebellion would be his own punishment.

**9:21** Paul is not saying that some of us are worth more than others, but simply that the Creator has control over the created object. The created object, therefore, has no right to demand any-

thing from its Creator—its very existence depends on him. Keeping this perspective removes any temptation to have pride in personal achievement.

**9:25, 26** Seven hundred years before Jesus' birth, Hosea (Osee) told of God's intention to restore his people. Paul applies Hosea's message to God's intention to bring Gentiles into his family after the Jews rejected his plan. Verse 25 is a quotation from Hosea 2:23 and verse 26 is from Hosea 1:10.

**9:27-29** Isaiah (Esaias) prophesied that only a small number—a remnant—of God's original people, the Jews, would be saved. Paul saw this happening in every city where he preached. Even though he went to the Jews first, relatively few ever accepted the message. Verses 27 and 28 are based on Isaiah 10:22, 23 and 9:29 is from Isaiah 1:9.

**9:31-33** Sometimes we are like these people, trying to get right with God by keeping his laws. We may think that church attendance, church work, giving offerings, and being nice will be enough. After all, we've played by the rules, haven't we? But Paul's words sting—this approach never succeeds. Paul explains that God's plan is not for those who try to earn his favor by being good. It is for those who realize they can never be good enough and so must depend on Christ. Only by putting our faith in what Jesus Christ has done will we be saved. If we do that, we will never be disappointed ("ashamed").

**9:32** The Jews had a worthy goal—to honor God. But they tried to achieve it the wrong way—by rigid and painstaking obedience to the Law. Some of them became more dedicated to the Law than to God. They thought if they kept the Law, God would have



**10:2**  
Acts 22:3

**10:3**  
Rom 9:31-32

**10:4**  
Gal 3:24

**10:5**  
Lev 18:5  
Ezek 20:11, 13, 21  
Rom 7:10

**10:6-8**  
<sup>†</sup>Deut 30:12-14

**10:9**  
Matt 10:32

**10:11**  
<sup>†</sup>Isa 28:16  
Rom 9:33

**10:12**  
Acts 15:9  
Eph 2:4-7

**10:13**  
<sup>†</sup>Joel 2:32  
Acts 2:21

**10:15**  
<sup>†</sup>Isa 52:7  
<sup>†</sup>Nah 1:15

**10:16**  
<sup>†</sup>Isa 53:1  
John 12:38  
Heb 4:2

**10:17**  
Gal 3:2, 5  
Col 3:16

**10:18**  
<sup>†</sup>Ps 19:4

**10** Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. <sup>2</sup>For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. <sup>3</sup>For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. <sup>4</sup>For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

*Salvation is for everyone*

<sup>5</sup>For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. <sup>6</sup>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.) <sup>7</sup>or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) <sup>8</sup>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; <sup>9</sup>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. <sup>10</sup>For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. <sup>11</sup>For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. <sup>12</sup>For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. <sup>13</sup>For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

<sup>14</sup>How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? <sup>15</sup>And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

<sup>16</sup>But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? <sup>17</sup>So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

**10:2** record: witness. **10:8** nigh: near. **10:16** Esaias: Isaiah.

to accept them as his people. But God cannot be controlled. The Jews did not see that their Scriptures, the Old Testament, taught salvation by faith and not by human effort (see Genesis 15:6).

**9:32** The “stumblingstone” was Jesus. The Jews did not believe in him because he didn’t meet their expectations for the Messiah. Some people still stumble over Christ because salvation by faith doesn’t make sense to them. They would rather try to work their way to God, or else they expect him simply to overlook their sins. Others stumble over Christ because his values are the opposite of the world’s. He asks for humility, and many are unwilling to humble themselves before him. He requires obedience, and many refuse to put their wills at his disposal. Have you stumbled over this rock, or have you chosen to build your life on it?

**10:1** What will happen to the Jewish people who believe in God but not in Christ? Since they believe in the same God, won’t they be saved? If that were true, Paul would not have worked so hard and sacrificed so much to teach them about Christ. Since Jesus is the most complete revelation of God, and we cannot fully know God apart from Christ; and since God appointed Jesus to bring God and man together, we cannot come to God by another path. The Jews, like everyone else, can find salvation only through Jesus Christ (John 14:6; Acts 4:12). Like Paul, we should wish that all Jews might be saved. We should pray for them and lovingly share the Good News with them.

**10:3-5** Rather than living by faith in God, the Jews established customs and traditions (in addition to God’s Law) to try to make themselves acceptable in God’s sight. But human effort, no matter how sincere, can never substitute for the goodness God offers us by faith. The only way to *earn* salvation is to be perfect—and that is impossible. We can only hold out our empty hands and receive salvation as a gift.

**10:4** Christ is the “end of the law” in two ways. He fulfills the purpose and goal of the Law (Matthew 5:17) in that he perfectly exemplified God’s desires on earth. But he is also the termination of the Law because in comparison to Christ, the Law is powerless to save.

**10:5** In order to be saved by the Law, a person would have to live a perfect life, not sinning once. Then why did God give the

Law, since he knew people couldn’t keep it? According to Paul, one reason the Law was given was to show people how guilty they are (Galatians 3:19). The Law was a shadow of Christ—that is the sacrificial system educated the people so that when the true sacrifice came, they would be able to understand his work. The system of ceremonial laws was to last until the coming of Christ. The Law points to our need for a Savior.

**10:6-8** Paul adapts Moses’ farewell challenge from Deuteronomy 30:11–14 to apply to Christ. Christ has provided our salvation through his incarnation (God in human form) and resurrection. God’s salvation is right in front of us. He will come to us wherever we are. All we need to do is to respond and accept his gift of salvation.

**10:8-12** Have you ever been asked, “How do I become a Christian?” These verses give you the beautiful answer—salvation is as close as your own mouth and heart. People think it must be a complicated process, but it is not. If we believe in our hearts and say with our mouths that Christ is the risen Lord, we will be saved.

**10:14** In telling others about Christ, an effective witness must include more than being a good example. Eventually, we will have to explain the content, the *what* and the *how* of the Gospel. Modeling the Christian life is important, but we will need to connect the mind of the unbeliever and the message of the Gospel. There should never be a debate between those who favor lifestyle evangelism (one’s living proclaims the Gospel) and confrontational evangelism (declaring the message). Both should be used together in promoting the Gospel.

**10:15** We must take God’s great message of salvation to others so they can respond to the Good News. How will your loved ones and neighbors hear it unless someone tells them? Is God calling you to take a part in making his message known in your community? Think of one person who needs to hear the Good News, and think of something you can do to help him or her hear it. Then take that step as soon as possible.

<sup>18</sup>But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. <sup>19</sup>But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by *them that are* no people, *and* by a foolish nation I will anger you. <sup>20</sup>But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. <sup>21</sup>But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

**10:19**  
<sup>†</sup>Deut 32:21  
**10:20**  
<sup>†</sup>Isa 65:1  
 Rom 9:30  
**10:21**  
<sup>†</sup>Isa 65:2

### God's mercy on Israel

**11** I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

<sup>2</sup>God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, <sup>3</sup>Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.

<sup>4</sup>But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to *the image of Baal*.

<sup>5</sup>Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. <sup>6</sup>And if by grace, then *is it* no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if *it be* of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

<sup>7</sup>What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded <sup>8</sup>(According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. <sup>9</sup>And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them: <sup>10</sup>let their eyes be darkened that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.

<sup>11</sup>I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but *rather* through their fall salvation *is come* unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. <sup>12</sup>Now if the fall of them *be* the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?

**11:1**  
 Phil 3:5

**11:2**  
 1 Sam 12:22

**11:3**  
<sup>†</sup>1 Kgs 19:10, 14

**11:4**  
<sup>†</sup>1 Kgs 19:18

**11:5**  
 Rom 9:27

**11:6**  
 Rom 4:4

**11:7**  
 Rom 9:31

**11:8**  
<sup>†</sup>Deut 29:4  
<sup>†</sup>Isa 29:10  
 Matt 13:14  
 John 12:40  
 Acts 28:26-27

**11:9-10**  
<sup>†</sup>Ps 69:22-23

**11:11**  
 Acts 13:46; 18:6

**10:18** verily: indeed. sound: voice. **10:21** gainsaying: obstinate. **11:1** cast away: rejected. **11:2** wot ye not: don't you know. Elias: Elijah. **11:3** digged: torn. **11:9** recompence: retribution. **11:12** diminishing: failure.

**10:18–20** Many Jews who looked for the Messiah refused to believe in him when he came. God offered his salvation to the Gentiles (“them that are no people” and “foolish nation”); thus many Gentiles who didn’t even know about a Messiah found and believed in him. Some “religious” people are spiritually blind, while those who have never been in a church are sometimes the most responsive to God’s message. Because appearances are deceiving, and we can’t see into people’s hearts, beware of judging beforehand who will respond to the Gospel and who will not.

**11:1ff** In this chapter Paul points out that not *all* Jews have rejected God’s message of salvation. Paul himself, after all, was a Jew, and so were Jesus’ disciples and nearly all of the early Christian missionaries.

**11:2** Elijah (Elias) was a great reforming prophet who challenged the Northern Kingdom of Israel to repent. See his Profile in 1 Kings 18, p. 535 for more information.

**11:2** God chose the Jews (“his people which he foreknew”) to be the people through whom the rest of the world could find salvation. But this did not mean the entire Jewish nation would be saved; only those who were faithful to God were considered true Jews (11:5). We are saved through faith in Christ, not because we are part of a nation, religion, or family. On what are you depending for salvation?

**11:6** Do you think it’s easier for God to love you when you’re good? Do you secretly suspect that God chose you because you deserved it? Do you think some people’s behavior is so bad that God couldn’t possibly save them? If you ever think this way, you don’t entirely understand that salvation is a free gift. It cannot be earned, in whole or in part; it can only be accepted with thankfulness and praise.

**11:7** “The rest were blinded” was God’s punishment for their sin. It was a confirmation of their own stubbornness. In judging them, God removed their ability to see and repent; thus, they would

experience the consequences of their rebellion. Resisting God is like saying to him, “Leave me alone!” But because God is always and everywhere present, his answer to that prayer might be to agree and make that person less sensitive, more hardened to him. The very possibility of that happening ought to keep us asking God specifically for ears that really hear and eyes that really see—openness and responsiveness to him.

**11:8–10** These verses describe the punishment for hardened hearts predicted by the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 6:9–13). If people refuse to hear God’s Good News, they eventually will be unable to understand it. Paul saw this happening in the Jewish congregations he visited on his missionary journeys. (Verse 8 is based on Deuteronomy 29:4 and Isaiah 29:10. Verses 9 and 10 are from Psalm 69:22, 23.)

**11:11ff** Paul had a vision of a church where all Jewish and Gentile believers would be united in their love of God and in obedience to Christ. While respecting God’s Law, this ideal church would look to Christ alone for salvation. One’s ethnic background and social status would be irrelevant (see Galatians 3:28)—what mattered would be one’s faith in Christ.

But Paul’s vision has not yet been realized. Many Jewish people rejected the Good News. They have depended on their heritage for salvation, and they do not have the “heart of obedience” that was so important to the Old Testament prophets and to Paul.

Once Gentiles became dominant in many of the Christian churches, they began rejecting Jews and even persecuting them. Unfortunately, this practice has recurred through the centuries.

True Christians should not persecute others. Both Gentiles and Jews have done so much to damage the cause of Christ, whom they claim to serve, that Paul’s vision often seems impossible to fulfill. Yet God chose the Jews, just as he chose the Gentiles, and he is still working to unite all believers in a new Israel, a new Jerusalem, ruled by his Son.

11:14  
1 Cor 9:20  
2 Tim 1:9

11:15  
Luke 15:24, 32  
Rom 5:10

11:17  
Jer 11:16  
Eph 2:11-16

11:18  
John 4:22

11:20  
Rom 12:16

11:22  
John 15:2, 14  
Heb 3:14

11:23  
2 Cor 3:14-16

11:25  
Luke 21:24  
Rom 12:16

11:26-27  
Ps 14:7  
<sup>†</sup>Isa 59:20-21  
Jer 31:31-34  
Heb 8:8; 10:16

11:29  
Heb 7:21

11:32  
Gal 3:22  
1 Tim 2:4

11:33  
Isa 45:15; 55:8

11:34  
Job 15:8; 36:22  
<sup>†</sup>Isa 40:13  
Jer 23:18  
1 Cor 2:16

<sup>13</sup>For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: <sup>14</sup>if by any means I may provoke to emulation *them which are* my flesh, and might save some of them. <sup>15</sup>For if the casting away of them *be* the reconciling of the world, what *shall* the receiving of *them be*, but life from the dead? <sup>16</sup>For if the firstfruit *be* holy, the lump is also *holy*: and if the root *be* holy, so *are* the branches.

<sup>17</sup>And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; <sup>18</sup>boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

<sup>19</sup>Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. <sup>20</sup>Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: <sup>21</sup>for if God spared not the natural branches, *take heed* lest he also spare not thee.

<sup>22</sup>Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in *his* goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. <sup>23</sup>And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. <sup>24</sup>For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural *branches*, be grafted into their own olive tree?

### *God's mercy on all*

<sup>25</sup>For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. <sup>26</sup>And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: <sup>27</sup>for this *is* my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

<sup>28</sup>As concerning the gospel, *they are* enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, *they are* beloved for the fathers' sakes. <sup>29</sup>For the gifts and calling of God *are* without repentance. <sup>30</sup>For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: <sup>31</sup>even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. <sup>32</sup>For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

<sup>33</sup>O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out! <sup>34</sup>For who hath known the mind of the

**11:13** *magnify mine office*: make much of my ministry. **11:14** *emulation*: jealousy. **11:17** *wert grafted*: were grafted. *partakest*: share. *fatness*: richness. **11:20** *highminded*: proud. **11:25** *conceits*: opinion. **11:26** *Zion*: Zion. **11:28** *as touching*: concerning.

**11:13-15** Paul was appointed a missionary to the Gentiles, and he reminded his Jewish brothers of this, hoping they, too, would want to be saved. The Jews were “cast away,” and thus Gentiles were offered salvation. But when a Jew comes to Christ, there is great rejoicing, as if a dead person has come back to life.

**11:16-25** Paul, speaking to Gentile Christians, warns them not to feel superior because God rejected some Jews. The Jewish religion, he says, is like the root of a productive tree, and the Jewish people are the tree's natural branches. Because of faithlessness, some of the Jews have been broken off, and Gentile believers have been grafted into the tree like a wild olive branch. Both Jews and Gentiles share the tree's nourishment and depend on Christ for life; neither can rest on heritage or culture for salvation.

**11:22** “Continue in his goodness” refers to steadfast perseverance in faith. Steadfastness is a proof of the reality of faith and a by-product of salvation, not a means to it.

**11:26** Some say the phrase “and so all Israel shall be saved” means that the majority of Jews in the final generation before Christ's return will turn to Christ for salvation. Others say that Paul is using the term “Israel” for the “spiritual” nation of Israel, which is comprised of Jews and Gentiles who have received salvation through faith in Christ. Thus “all Israel” (or all believers) will receive God's promised gift of salvation. Still others say that “all Israel” means Israel as a whole will have a role in Christ's Kingdom. The Jews' identity as a people won't be discarded. God chose the nation of Israel, and he has never rejected it. He also chose the church, through Jesus Christ, and he will never reject it either. This does not mean, of course, that all Jews or all church mem-

bers will be saved. It is possible to be Jewish or to belong to a church without ever responding in faith. But just because some people have rejected Christ does not mean that God stops working with either Israel or the church. He continues to offer salvation freely to all. Still others say that the phrase “and so” means “in this way” or “this is how,” referring to the necessity of faith in Christ.

**11:28-32** In this passage Paul shows how the Jews and the Gentiles benefit each other. Whenever God shows mercy to one group, the other shares the blessing. In God's original plan, the Jews would be the source of God's blessing to the Gentiles (see Genesis 12:3). When the Jews neglected this mission, God blessed the Gentiles anyway through the Jewish Messiah. He still maintained his love for the Jews because of his promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (“for the fathers' sakes”). The privileges and invitation of God given to Israel will never be withdrawn. But someday all faithful Jews will share in God's mercy. God's plans will not be thwarted: He will “have mercy upon all.” For a beautiful picture of Jews and Gentiles experiencing rich blessings, see Isaiah 60.

**11:34-36** The implication of these questions is that no one has fully understood the mind of the Lord. No one has been his counselor. And God owes nothing to any one of us. Isaiah and Jeremiah asked similar questions to show that we are unable to give advice to God or criticize his ways (Isaiah 40:13; Jeremiah 23:18). God alone is the possessor of absolute power and absolute wisdom. In the final analysis, all of us are absolutely dependent on God. He is the source of all things, including ourselves. He is the power that sustains and rules the world that we live in. And God works out all things to bring glory to himself. The all-powerful God deserves our praise.

Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? <sup>35</sup>Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? <sup>36</sup>For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen.

**11:35**  
Job 41:11  
**11:36**  
1 Cor 8:6

## B. HOW TO BEHAVE (12:1—16:27)

Moving from the theological to the practical, Paul gives guidelines for living as a redeemed people in a fallen world. We are to give ourselves to Christ as living sacrifices, obey the government, love our neighbors, and take special care of those who are weak in the faith. He closes with personal remarks. Throughout this section, we learn how to live our faith each day.

### 1. Personal responsibility

*A living sacrifice to God*

**12** 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. <sup>2</sup>And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

**12:1**  
Rom 6:13  
1 Pet 2:5

**12:2**  
Gal 1:4  
Eph 4:23  
Col 3:10

<sup>3</sup>For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of *himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. <sup>4</sup>For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: <sup>5</sup>so we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

**12:3**  
1 Cor 12:11  
Eph 4:7

**12:4**  
1 Cor 12:12

<sup>6</sup>Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith; <sup>7</sup>or ministry, *let us wait* on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; <sup>8</sup>or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

**12:5**  
1 Cor 12:27  
Eph 4:25

**12:6-8**  
1 Cor 12:4-11

<sup>9</sup>*Let love be* without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

**12:9**  
Amos 5:15  
1 Tim 1:5

**11:35** *recompensed*: repaid. **12:1** *reasonable service*: spiritual worship. **12:4** *office*: function. **12:7** *ministry*: service. *let us wait on our ministering*: on serving. **12:8** *with simplicity*: generously. *ruleth*: leads. **12:9** *dissimulation*: hypocrisy. *cleave*: cling.

**12:1** When sacrificing an animal according to God's Law, a priest killed the animal, cut it in pieces, and placed it on the altar. Sacrifice was important, but even in the Old Testament God made it clear that obedience from the heart was much more important (see 1 Samuel 15:22; Psalm 40:6; Amos 5:21–24). God wants us to offer ourselves, not animals, as *living sacrifices*—daily laying aside our own desires to follow him, putting all our energy and resources at his disposal and trusting him to guide us. We do this out of gratitude that our sins have been forgiven.

**12:1, 2** God has good, pleasing, and perfect plans for his children. He wants us to be new people with renewed minds, living to honor and obey him. Since he wants only what is best for us, and since he gave his Son to make our new life possible, we should joyfully volunteer as living sacrifices for his service.

**12:2** Christians are called to “be not conformed to this world” with its behavior and customs that are usually selfish and often corrupting. Many Christians wisely decide that much worldly behavior is off-limits for them. Our refusal to conform to this world's values, however, must go even deeper than the level of behavior and customs; it must be firmly founded in our minds: “Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” It is possible to avoid most worldly customs and still be proud, covetous, selfish, stubborn, and arrogant. Only when the Holy Spirit renews, reeducates, and redirects our minds are we truly transformed (see 8:5).

**12:3** Healthy self-esteem is important because some of us think too little of ourselves; on the other hand, some of us overestimate ourselves. The key to an honest and accurate evaluation is knowing the basis of our self-worth—our identity in Christ. Apart from him, we aren't capable of very much by eternal standards; in him, we are valuable and capable of worthy service. Evaluating yourself by the worldly standards of success and achievement can cause you to think too much about your worth in the eyes of others and miss your true value in God's eyes.

**12:4, 5** Paul uses the concept of the human body to teach how Christians should live and work together. Just as the parts of the body function under the direction of the brain, so Christians are to

work together under the command and authority of Jesus Christ (see 1 Corinthians 12:12–31; Ephesians 4:1–16).

**12:6** God gives us gifts so we can build up his church. To use them effectively, we must (1) realize that all gifts and abilities come from God; (2) understand that not everyone has the same gifts; (3) know who we are and what we do best; (4) dedicate our gifts to God's service and not to our personal success; (5) be willing to utilize our gifts wholeheartedly, not holding back anything from God's service. God's gifts differ in nature, power, and effectiveness according to his wisdom and graciousness, not according to our faith. Our role is to be faithful and to seek ways to serve others with what Christ has given us.

**12:6** *Prophecy* in Scripture is not always a prediction about the future. Often it means preaching God's messages (1 Corinthians 14:1–3).

**12:6–8** Look at this list of gifts and imagine the kinds of people who would have each gift. Prophets are often bold and articulate. Servers (“ministers”) are faithful and loyal. Teachers are clear thinkers. Preachers (“exhorters”) know how to motivate others. Givers are generous and trusting. Administrators (“rulers”) are good organizers and managers. Comforters are caring people who are happy to give their time to others. It would be difficult for one person to embody all these gifts. An assertive prophet would not usually make a good counselor, and a generous giver might fail as an administrator. When you identify your own gifts (and this list is far from complete), ask how you can use them to build up God's family. At the same time, realize that your gifts can't do the work of the church all alone. Be thankful for people whose gifts are completely different from yours. Let your strengths balance their weaknesses, and be grateful that their abilities make up for your deficiencies. Together you can build Christ's church.

**12:9, 10** Most of us have learned how to be courteous to others—how to speak kindly, avoid hurting their feelings, and appear to take an interest in them. We may even be skilled in pretending to feel moved with compassion when we hear of others' needs, or to become indignant when we learn of injustice.

**12:10**  
Phil 2:3  
1 Thes 4:9  
2 Pet 1:7

**12:11**  
Acts 18:25  
Rev 3:15

**12:12**  
Heb 10:32, 36

**12:13**  
Heb 13:2

**12:14**  
Matt 5:44

**12:16**  
Prov 3:7  
Isa 5:21

**12:17**  
Prov 3:4; 20:22  
1 Thes 5:15

**12:19**  
<sup>1</sup>Deut 32:35

**12:20**  
<sup>1</sup>Prov 25:21-22  
Matt 5:44

**13:1**  
Dan 2:21

<sup>10</sup>Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; <sup>11</sup>not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; <sup>12</sup>rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; <sup>13</sup>distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

<sup>14</sup>Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. <sup>15</sup>Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. <sup>16</sup>Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

<sup>17</sup>Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. <sup>18</sup>If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. <sup>19</sup>Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. <sup>20</sup>Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. <sup>21</sup>Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

### *Obedience to the government*

**13** Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. <sup>2</sup>Whosoever therefore resisteth the power,

**12:12** *continuing instant*: constant. **12:16** *mind not high things*: do not be proud, *condescend to*: associate with, *estate*: position, *conceits*: estimation. **12:17** *recompense*: repay, *provide things honest*: do what is right. **13:1** *higher powers*: governing authorities.

But God calls us to real and sincere love ("let love be without dissimulation") that goes far beyond pretense and politeness. Real love requires concentration and effort. It means helping others become better people. It demands our time, money, and personal involvement. No individual has the capacity to express love to a whole community, but the body of Christ in your town does. Look for people who need your love, and look for ways you and your fellow believers can love your community for Christ.

**12:10** We can honor others in one of two ways. One involves ulterior motives. We honor our bosses so they will reward us, our employees so they will work harder, the wealthy so they will contribute to our cause, the powerful so they will use their power for us and not against us. God's way involves love. As Christians, we honor people because they have been created in God's image, because they are our brothers and sisters in Christ, because they have a unique contribution to make to Christ's church. Does God's way of honoring others sound too difficult for your competitive nature? Why not try to outdo one another in showing honor? Put others first!

**12:13** Christian hospitality differs from social entertaining. Entertaining focuses on the host: The home must be spotless; the food must be well prepared and abundant; the host must appear relaxed and good-natured. Hospitality, by contrast, focuses on the guests. Their needs—whether for a place to stay, nourishing food, a listening ear, or acceptance—are of first importance. Hospitality can happen in a messy home. It can happen around a dinner table where the main dish is canned soup. It can even happen while the host and the guest are doing chores together. Don't be afraid to offer hospitality just because you are too tired, too busy, or not wealthy enough to entertain.

**12:16** Many people use their contacts and relationships for selfish ambition. They select those people who will help them climb the social ladder. Christ demonstrated and taught that we should treat all people with respect—those of a different race, the handicapped, the poor, young and old, male and female. We must never consider others as being beneath us. Paul says we need to live in harmony with others and not be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. Are you able to do humble tasks with others? Do you welcome conversation with unattractive, non-prestigious people? Are you willing to befriend newcomers and entry-level people? Or do you relate only to those who will help you get ahead?

**12:17–21** These verses summarize the real core of Christian living. If we love someone the way Christ loves us, we will be willing to forgive. If we have experienced God's grace, we will want to pass it on to others. And remember, grace is *undeserved* favor. By giving an enemy a drink, we're not excusing his misdeeds.

We're recognizing him, forgiving him, and loving him in spite of his sins—just as Christ did for us.

**12:19–21** In this day of constant lawsuits and incessant demands for legal rights, Paul's command sounds almost impossible. When someone hurts you deeply, instead of giving him what he deserves, Paul says to befriend him. Why does Paul tell us to forgive our enemies? (1) Forgiveness may break a cycle of retaliation and lead to mutual reconciliation. (2) It may make the enemy feel ashamed and change his ways. (3) By contrast, returning evil for evil hurts you just as much as it hurts your enemy. Even if your enemy never repents, forgiving him will free you of a heavy load of bitterness.

**12:19–21** Forgiveness involves both attitudes and actions. If you find it hard to *feel* forgiving toward someone who has hurt you, try to *act* forgiving. If appropriate, tell this person you would like to heal your relationship. Give him a helping hand. Send him a gift. Smile at him. Many times you will discover that right actions lead to right feelings.

**13:1ff** Christians understand Romans 13 in different ways. All Christians agree that we are to live at peace with the state as long as the state allows us to live by our religious convictions. For hundreds of years, however, there have been at least three interpretations of how we are to do this.

(1) Some Christians believe that the state is so corrupt that Christians should have as little to do with it as possible. Although they should be good citizens as long as they can do so without compromising their beliefs, they should not work for the government, vote, or serve in the military.

(2) Others believe God has given the state authority in certain areas and the church authority in others. Christians can be loyal to both and can work for either. They should not, however, confuse the two. In this view, church and state are concerned with two totally different spheres—the spiritual and the physical—and thus complement each other but do not work together.

(3) Still others believe that Christians have a responsibility to make the state better. They can do this politically, by electing Christian or other high-principled leaders. They can also do this morally, by serving as an influence for good in society. In this view, church and state ideally work together for the good of all.

None of these views advocate rebelling against or refusing to obey the government's laws or regulations unless those laws clearly require you to violate the moral standards revealed by God. Wherever we find ourselves, we must be responsible citizens, as well as responsible Christians.

**13:1** Are there times when we should not obey the government? We should never allow government to force us to disobey God. Jesus and his apostles never disobeyed the government for



resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. <sup>3</sup>For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: <sup>4</sup>for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil. <sup>5</sup>Wherefore *ye* must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

<sup>6</sup>For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. <sup>7</sup>Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

#### *Love fulfills God's requirements*

<sup>8</sup>Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. <sup>9</sup>For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

<sup>10</sup>Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law.

<sup>11</sup>And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. <sup>12</sup>The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. <sup>13</sup>Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. <sup>14</sup>But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lusts *thereof*.

#### *Weak and strong believers*

**14** Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, *but* not to doubtful disputations. <sup>2</sup>For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. <sup>3</sup>Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth:

**13:2** *damnation*: judgment. **13:3** *terror*: cause of fear. **13:4** *minister*: servant. *in vain*: for nothing. **13:6** *tribute*: taxes. **13:7** *render*: give. *custom*: revenue. **13:9** *briefly comprehended*: summed up. **13:13** *rioting*: carousing. *chambering*: sexual immorality. *wantonness*: debauchery. **14:1** *receive ye*: accept. *to doubtful disputations*: for disputes over opinions. **14:2** *herbs*: only vegetables.

**13:3**  
1 Pet 2:13-14

**13:5**  
1 Pet 2:13

**13:7**  
Matt 22:21  
Mark 12:17  
Luke 20:25

**13:8**  
Matt 5:34  
John 13:34

**13:9**  
Exod 20:13-15, 17  
<sup>†</sup>Lev 19:18  
Deut 5:17-19, 21

**13:10**  
Matt 22:39  
John 13:34-35  
Gal 5:13-14

**13:11**  
1 Cor 7:29-31  
1 Thes 5:5-6  
Jas 5:8  
1 Pet 4:7

**13:12**  
Eph 5:11; 6:13  
1 Thes 5:8

**13:13**  
Luke 21:34  
Eph 5:18

**14:1**  
1 Cor 9:22

**14:2**  
1 Cor 10:25-27

**14:3**  
Col 2:16

personal reasons; when they disobeyed, it was in order to follow their higher loyalty to God. Their disobedience was not cheap: They were threatened, beaten, thrown into jail, tortured, or executed for their convictions. Like them, if we are compelled to disobey, we must be ready to accept the consequences.

**13:3, 4** Willingly or unwittingly, people in authority are God's servants. They are allowed their positions in order to do good. When authorities are unjust, however, good people are afraid. When authorities are just, people who are doing right have nothing to fear. This provides our principal motivation to pray for our leaders. Praying for those in authority over us will also mean that we will watch them closely. If we pray diligently for our leaders, we will be functioning as God's sentinels.

**13:8** Why is love for others called a debt? We are permanently in debt to Christ for the lavish love he has poured out on us. The only way we can even begin to repay this debt is by fulfilling our obligation to love others in turn. Since Christ's love will always be infinitely greater than ours, we will always have the obligation to love our neighbors.

**13:9** Somehow many of us have gotten the idea that self-love is wrong. But if this were the case, it would be pointless to love our neighbors as ourselves. Paul explains what he means by self-love. Even if you have low self-esteem, you probably don't willingly let yourself go hungry. You clothe yourself reasonably well. You make sure there's a roof over your head if you can. You try not to let yourself be cheated or injured. And you get angry if someone tries to ruin your marriage. This is the kind of love we need to have for our neighbors. Do we see that others are fed, clothed, and housed as well as they can be? Are we concerned about issues of social justice? Loving others as ourselves means to be actively working to see that their needs are met. Interestingly, people who focus on others rather than on themselves rarely suffer from low self-esteem.

**13:10** Christians must obey the law of love, which supersedes both religious and civil laws. How easy it is to excuse our indiffer-

ence to others merely because we have no legal obligation to help them. It is even easy to justify harming them if our actions are technically legal! But Jesus does not leave loopholes in the law of love. Whenever love demands it, we are to go beyond human legal requirements and imitate the God of love. See James 2:8, 9; 4:11 and 1 Peter 2:16, 17 for more about this law of love.

**13:12-14** Some people are surprised that Paul lists jealousy ("envying") and lust ("wantonness") with the gross and obvious sins of drunkenness, adultery, and fighting. Like Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), Paul considers attitudes as important as actions. Just as hatred leads to murder, so jealousy leads to fighting and lust to adultery. When Christ returns, he wants to find his people clean on the inside as well as on the outside.

**13:14** How do we "put on the Lord Jesus Christ"? First we identify with Christ by being baptized (Galatians 3:27). This shows our solidarity with other Christians and with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Second, we exemplify the qualities Jesus showed while he was here on earth (love, humility, truth, service). In some sense, we role-play what Jesus would do in our situation (see Ephesians 4:24-32; Colossians 3:10-17). We also must not give our desires any opportunity to lead us into sin. Avoid those situations that open the door to gratifying sinful desires.

**14:1** This verse assumes there will be differences of opinion in the church about what is right and wrong. "Doubtful disputations" means don't pass judgment on issues that are matters of opinion. These differences should not be feared or avoided but accepted and handled with love. Don't expect everyone, even in the best church, to agree on every subject. Through sharing ideas we can come to a fuller understanding of what the Bible teaches. Accept, listen to, and respect others. Differences of opinion need not cause division. They can be a source of learning and richness in our relationships.

**14:1** Who is weak in faith and who is strong? We are all weak in some areas and strong in others. Our faith is strong in an area if

14:4  
Matt 7:1

14:6  
1 Cor 10:30

14:7  
2 Cor 5:15  
Gal 2:20

14:8  
Phil 1:20  
1 Thes 5:10

14:10  
Matt 25:31-32  
Acts 17:31  
2 Cor 5:10

14:11  
1 Isa 45:23; 49:18

14:13  
Matt 7:1  
2 Cor 6:3

14:14  
Acts 10:15  
1 Cor 8:7

for God hath received him. <sup>4</sup>Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

<sup>5</sup>One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. <sup>6</sup>He that regardeth the day, regardeth *it* unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it*. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. <sup>7</sup>For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. <sup>8</sup>For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. <sup>9</sup>For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

<sup>10</sup>But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. <sup>11</sup>For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. <sup>12</sup>So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. <sup>13</sup>Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in *his* brother's way.

<sup>14</sup>I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that *there is* nothing unclean of itself: but

14:4 *holden up*: upheld. 14:9 *revived*: returned to life. 14:10 *set at nought*: despise.

we can survive contact with sinners without falling into their patterns. It is weak in an area if we must avoid certain activities, people, or places in order to protect our spiritual life. It is important to take a self-inventory in order to find out our strengths and weaknesses. Whenever we are in doubt, we should ask, "Can I do that without sinning? Can I influence others for good, rather than being influenced by them?"

In areas of strength, we should not fear being defiled by the world; rather we should go and serve God. In areas of weakness, we need to be cautious. If we have a strong faith but shelter it, we are not doing Christ's work in the world. If we have a weak faith but expose it, we are being extremely foolish.

**14:1ff** What is weak faith? Paul is speaking about immature faith, faith that has not yet developed the muscle it needs to stand against external pressures. For example, if a person who once worshiped idols became a Christian, he might understand perfectly well that Christ saved him through faith and that idols have no real power. Still, because of his past associations, he might be badly shaken if he knowingly ate meat that had been used in idol worship as part of a heathen ritual. If a person who once worshiped God on the required Jewish holy days became a Christian, he might well know that Christ saved him through faith, not through his keeping of the Law. Still, when the feast days came, he might feel empty and unfaithful if he didn't dedicate them to God.

Paul responds to both weak brothers in love. Both are acting according to their consciences, but their honest scruples do not need to be made into rules for the church. Certainly some issues are central to the faith and worth fighting for—but many are based on individual differences and should not be legislated. Our principle should be: "In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; in everything, love."

**14:2** Eating "all things" may refer to a strong Christian being free from dietary restrictions, or it may refer to his eating meat offered to idols; "another eateth herbs" refers to one weaker in the faith who eats only vegetables and refuses to eat meat that has been offered to idols. But how would Christians end up eating meat that had been offered to idols? The ancient system of sacrifice was at the center of the religious, social, and domestic life of the Roman world. After a sacrifice was presented to a god in a heathen temple, only part of it was burned. The remainder was often sent to the market to be sold. Thus a Christian might easily—even unknowingly—buy such meat in the marketplace or eat it at the home of a friend. Should a Christian question the source of his meat? Some thought there was nothing wrong with eating meat that had been offered to idols, since idols were not real gods. Others carefully checked the source of their meat or else gave up meat altogether, in order to avoid a guilty conscience. The problem was especially acute for Christians who had once been idol worshippers. For them, such a strong reminder of their pagan days

might weaken their newfound faith. Paul also deals with this problem in 1 Corinthians 8.

**14:10–12** Each person is accountable to Christ, not to others. While the church must be uncompromising in its stand against activities expressly forbidden by Scripture (adultery, homosexuality, murder, theft), it should not create additional rules and regulations and give them equal standing with God's Law. Many times Christians base their moral judgments on opinion, personal dislikes, or cultural bias rather than on the Word of God. When they do this, they show that their own faith is weak. They do not think God is powerful enough to guide his children. When we stand before God's court of justice ("judgment seat"), we won't be worried about what our Christian neighbor has done (see 2 Corinthians 5:10).

**14:13** Both "strong" and "weak" Christians can cause their brothers to stumble. The strong but insensitive Christian may flaunt his freedom and intentionally offend others' consciences. The scrupulous but weak Christian tries to fence others in with petty rules and regulations, thus causing dissension. Paul wants his readers to be both strong in the faith and sensitive to others' needs. Since we are all strong in some areas and weak in others, we need to constantly monitor the effects of our behavior on others.

**14:13ff** Some Christians use an invisible weaker brother to support their own opinions, prejudices, or standards. "You must live by these standards," they say, "or you will be offending the weaker brother." In truth, the person would often be offending no one but the speaker. While Paul urges us to be sensitive to those whose faith may be harmed by our actions, we should not sacrifice our liberty in Christ just to satisfy the selfish motives of those who are trying to force their opinions on us. Neither fear them nor criticize them, but follow Christ as closely as you can.

**14:14** At the Jerusalem council (Acts 15), the Jewish church in Jerusalem asked the Gentile church in Antioch not to eat meat that had been sacrificed to idols. Paul was at the Jerusalem council, and he accepted this request, not because he felt this practice was wrong in itself, but because this practice would deeply offend many Jewish believers. Paul did not think the issue was worth dividing the church over; his desire was to promote unity. So he concludes, "to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean." Paul's practice was to honor, as far as possible, the convictions of others.

Believers are called to accept one another without judging our varied opinions. However, when the situation has to be faced, how should we deal with those who disagree with us? Paul's response is that all believers should act in love so as to maintain peace in the church.

to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean. <sup>15</sup>But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. <sup>16</sup>Let not then your good be evil spoken of: <sup>17</sup>for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. <sup>18</sup>For he that in these things serveth Christ *is* acceptable to God, and approved of men. <sup>19</sup>Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

<sup>20</sup>For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed *are* pure; but *it is* evil for that man who eateth with offence. <sup>21</sup>*It is* good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor *any thing* whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. <sup>22</sup>Hast thou faith? have *it* to thyself before God. Happy *is* he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. <sup>23</sup>And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith: for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin.

### Live to please others

**15** We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. <sup>2</sup>Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification. <sup>3</sup>For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. <sup>4</sup>For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

<sup>5</sup>Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: <sup>6</sup>that ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### Fellowship among believers

<sup>7</sup>Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God. <sup>8</sup>Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made* unto the fathers: <sup>9</sup>and that the Gentiles might glorify God for *his* mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. <sup>10</sup>And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. <sup>11</sup>And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. <sup>12</sup>And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.

<sup>13</sup>Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

## 2. Personal notes

### Paul explains his reason for writing

<sup>14</sup>And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. <sup>15</sup>Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, <sup>16</sup>that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

**14:15** *be grieved with*: is hurt because of. *meat*: food. *charitably*: in love. **14:19** *edify*: build up. **14:20** *with offence*: that which makes others fall. **14:23** *damned*: condemned. **15:1** *infirmities*: failings. **15:2** *edification*: build him up. **15:3** *reproaches*: insults. **15:4** *aforetime*: in the past. **15:12** *Esaias*: Isaiah. **15:15** *in some sort*: on some points. *putting you in mind*: to remind you again.

**14:15**  
1 Cor 8:11-13

**14:16**  
1 Cor 10:30  
Titus 2:5

**14:17**  
Rom 15:13  
Gal 5:22

**14:19**  
Rom 12:18; 15:2

**14:20**  
Acts 10:15  
1 Cor 8:9-12

**14:21**  
1 Cor 8:13

**14:22**  
1 Jn 3:21

**15:2**  
Rom 14:19  
1 Cor 9:19; 10:24  
Gal 6:2

**15:3**  
†Ps 69:9

**15:4**  
Rom 4:23-24  
2 Tim 3:16

**15:5**  
1 Cor 1:10  
2 Cor 1:3

**15:6**  
Rev 1:6

**15:7**  
Rom 14:1

**15:8**  
Matt 15:24  
Acts 3:25-26  
2 Cor 1:20

**15:9**  
†2 Sam 22:50  
†Ps 18:49

**15:10**  
†Deut 32:43

**15:11**  
†Ps 117:1

**15:12**  
†Isa 11:10  
Rev 5:5; 22:16

**15:14**  
2 Pet 1:12

**15:15**  
Rom 1:5; 12:3

**15:16**  
Phil 2:17

**14:20, 21** Sin is not just a private matter. Everything we do affects others, and we have to think of them constantly. God created us to be interdependent, not independent. We who are strong in our faith must, without pride or condescension, treat others with love, patience, and self-restraint.

**14:23** We try to steer clear of actions forbidden by Scripture, of course, but sometimes Scripture is silent. Then we should follow our conscience. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" means that to go against a conviction will leave a person with a guilty or uneasy conscience. When God shows us that something is wrong for us, we should avoid it. But we should not look down on other Christians who exercise their freedom in those areas.

**15:4** The knowledge of the Scriptures affects our attitude toward the present and the future. The more we know about what God has done in years past, the greater the confidence we have about

what he will do in the days ahead. We should read our Bibles diligently to increase our trust that God's will is best for us.

**15:5-7** The Roman church was a diverse community. It was made up of Jews and Gentiles, slaves and free people, rich and poor, strong and weak. So it was difficult for them to accept one another. Accepting means taking people into our homes as well as into our hearts, sharing meals and activities, and avoiding racial and economic discrimination. We must go out of our way to avoid favoritism. Consciously spend time greeting those you don't normally talk to, minimize differences, and seek common ground for fellowship. In this way you are accepting others as Christ has accepted you, and God is given glory.

**15:8** This verse means that Jesus came to bring the truth to the Jews ("the circumcision") and to show that God is true to his promises.

**15:12** The "root of Jesse" refers to Christ being the heir from the family line of Jesse, David's father (1 Samuel 16:1).

**15:17**  
Phil 3:3

**15:18**  
Rom 1:5

**15:19**  
Acts 19:11  
1 Cor 2:4  
1 Thes 1:5

**15:20**  
Rom 1:15  
1 Cor 3:10  
2 Cor 10:13, 15

**15:21**  
Isa 52:15

**15:22**  
Rom 1:10-13  
1 Thes 2:18

**15:23**  
Acts 19:21  
Rom 1:10-11

**15:24**  
1 Cor 16:6

**15:25**  
Acts 19:21; 20:22

**15:26**  
1 Cor 16:1  
2 Cor 8:1; 9:2

**15:27**  
1 Cor 9:11

**15:29**  
Rom 1:10-11

**15:30**  
2 Cor 1:11  
Col 1:8; 4:12

**15:31**  
2 Thes 3:2

**15:32**  
Phlm 1:7

**15:33**  
Rom 16:20  
Heb 13:20

**16:1**  
Acts 18:18

**16:2**  
Phil 2:29

<sup>17</sup>I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. <sup>18</sup>For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, <sup>19</sup>through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

<sup>20</sup>Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation: <sup>21</sup>but as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand. <sup>22</sup>For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you.

#### *Paul explains his travel plans*

<sup>23</sup>But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you; <sup>24</sup>whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your *company*.

<sup>25</sup>But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. <sup>26</sup>For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. <sup>27</sup>It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things. <sup>28</sup>When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain. <sup>29</sup>And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

<sup>30</sup>Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in *your* prayers to God for me; <sup>31</sup>that I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which *I have* for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints; <sup>32</sup>that I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed. <sup>33</sup>Now the God of peace *be* with you all. Amen.

#### *Paul greets his friends*

**16** I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: <sup>2</sup>that ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

**15:18** wrought: done. **15:23** parts: regions. **15:27** verily: indeed. *partakers*: to share. *carnal*: material. **15:28** sealed: delivered. **15:30** beseech: beg. **16:2** becometh: worthy of the. *succourer*: helper.

**15:19** Illyricum was a Roman territory on the Adriatic Sea between present-day Italy and Greece. See the map in chapter 1, p. 1683.

**15:22** Paul wanted to visit the church at Rome, but he had delayed his visit because he had heard many good reports about the believers there and knew they were doing well on their own. It was more important for him to preach in areas that had not yet heard the Good News.

**15:23, 24** Paul was referring to the completion of his work in Corinth, the city from which he most likely wrote this letter. Most of Paul's three-month stay in Achaia (see Acts 20:3) was probably spent in Corinth. He believed he had done what God wanted him to do there—he was now looking forward to taking the Gospel to new lands west of Rome. When Paul eventually went to Rome, however, it was as a prisoner under house arrest (see Acts 28). Tradition holds that Paul was released for a time, and that he used this opportunity to go to Spain to preach the Good News. This journey is not mentioned in the book of Acts.

**15:27** "Carnal things" refers to material aid. If the Gentiles had received the Gospel ("spiritual things") originally from Jerusalem, surely they would want to offer financial help.

**15:30** Too often we see prayer as a time for comfort, reflection, or making requests to God. But here Paul urges believers to join in his struggle by means of prayer. Prayer is a weapon that all believers should use in interceding for others. Many of us know believers who are living in difficult places in order to communicate the gospel. Sending them funds is part of joining them in

their struggles, but prayer is also a crucial way of being with them. Missionaries strongly desire the prayers of those who have sent them out. Do your prayers reflect that struggle on their behalf?

**15:33** This phrase sounds like it should signal the end of the letter, and it does signal the end of Paul's teaching. He concludes his letter, then, with personal greetings and remarks.

**16:1, 2** Phebe was known as a servant (the Greek word used here is often translated "deaconess") and a helper. She apparently was wealthy and helped support Paul's ministry. She was highly regarded in the church, and she may have delivered this letter from Corinth to Rome. This provides evidence that women had important roles in the early church. Cenchrea, the town where Phebe lived, was the eastern port of Corinth, six miles from the city center.

<sup>3</sup>Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: <sup>4</sup>who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. <sup>5</sup>Like-wise greet the church that is in their house.

Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ. <sup>6</sup>Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us. <sup>7</sup>Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. <sup>8</sup>Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord. <sup>9</sup>Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.

<sup>10</sup>Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household. <sup>11</sup>Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord. <sup>12</sup>Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord. <sup>13</sup>Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.

<sup>14</sup>Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them. <sup>15</sup>Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them. <sup>16</sup>Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

#### Paul gives final instructions

<sup>17</sup>Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. <sup>18</sup>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. <sup>19</sup>For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.

<sup>20</sup>And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

<sup>21</sup>Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you.

<sup>22</sup>I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord.

<sup>23</sup>Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother. <sup>24</sup>The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

<sup>25</sup>Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, <sup>26</sup>but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: <sup>27</sup>to God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.

**16:5** salute: greet. is the firstfruits: was the first convert. **16:7** kinsmen: relatives. **16:17** beseech: beg. mark: take note of. offences: hindrances. doctrine: teaching. **16:18** good: smooth. fair: flattering. **16:21** Timotheus: Timothy. **16:23** chamberlain: treasurer. **16:25** stablish: establish.

**16:5**  
1 Cor 16:15, 19  
Col 4:15  
Phlm 1:2

**16:7**  
Rom 16:11, 21  
Col 4:10  
Phlm 1:23

**16:10**  
Acts 11:14

**16:11**  
Rom 16:7, 21

**16:13**  
Mark 15:21  
2 Jn 1:1

**16:16**  
1 Cor 16:20  
1 Thes 5:26  
1 Pet 5:14

**16:17**  
1 Cor 5:9, 11  
2 Thes 3:6  
2 Tim 3:5  
Titus 3:10  
2 Jn 1:10

**16:18**  
Phil 3:19  
Col 2:4  
2 Pet 2:3

**16:19**  
Matt 10:16

**16:20**  
Gen 3:15

**16:21**  
Acts 13:1; 16:1;  
17:5

**16:25**  
1 Cor 2:1  
Eph 1:9; 3:3-5  
Col 1:26-27; 2:2  
2 Tim 1:9-10  
1 Pet 1:20

**16:26**  
Rom 1:2, 5

**16:27**  
Rom 11:36

**16:3** Priscilla and Aquila were a married couple who had become Paul's close friends. They, along with all other Jews, had been expelled from Rome by the emperor (Acts 18:2, 3), and they had moved to Corinth. There they met Paul and invited him to live with them. They were Christians before they met Paul and probably told him much about the Roman church. Like Paul, Priscilla and Aquila were missionaries. They helped believers in Ephesus (Acts 18:18-28), in Rome when they were allowed to return, and again at Ephesus (2 Timothy 4:19).

**16:3** Priscilla and Aquila ministered effectively behind the scenes. Their tools were hospitality, friendship, and person-to-person teaching. They were not public speakers but private evangelists. For some of the Romans, their home was used for church meetings (16:5). Priscilla and Aquila challenge us with what a couple can do together to serve Christ. Do we regard our families and homes as gifts through which God can accomplish his work? How might God want to use your home and family to serve him?

**16:5ff** Paul's personal greetings went to Romans and Greeks, Jews and Gentiles, men and women, prisoners and prominent citizens. The church's base was broad; it crossed cultural, social, and economic lines. From this list we learn that the Christian community was mobile. Though Paul had not yet been to Rome, he had met these people in other places on his journeys.

**16:7** Some translations say that Andronicus and Junia were "of note among the apostles"—very likely they had distinguished themselves as missionaries. Scholars are not sure whether the second name should be Junias (masculine) or Junia (feminine). If Junia is correct, some suggest she was Andronicus's wife.

**16:17-20** When we read books or listen to sermons, we should check the content of what is written or said so that we won't be fooled by smooth style. Christians who study God's Word, asking him to reveal the truth, will not be fooled, even though superficial listeners may easily be taken in. For an example of believers who carefully checked God's Word, see Acts 17:10-12.

**16:21** Timothy (Timotheus) was a key person in the growth of the early church, traveling with Paul on his second missionary journey (Acts 16:1-3). Later Paul wrote two letters to him as he worked to strengthen the churches in Ephesus—1 and 2 Timothy. See his Profile in the book of 1 Timothy, p. 1833.

**16:25-27** Paul exclaims that it is wonderful to be alive when God's secret—his way of saving the Gentiles—is becoming known throughout the world! All the Old Testament prophecies were coming true, and God was using Paul to tell this Good News.

**16:25-27** As Jerusalem was the center of Jewish life, Rome was the world's political, religious, social, and economic center. There the major government decisions were made, and from there the Gospel spread to the ends of the earth. The church in Rome was a cosmopolitan mixture of Jews, Gentiles, slaves, free people, men, women, Roman citizens, and world travelers; therefore, it had potential for both great influence and great conflict.

Paul had not yet been to Rome to meet all the Christians there, and, of course, he has not yet met us. We, too, live in a cosmopolitan setting with the entire world open to us. We also have the potential for both widespread influence and wrenching conflict. We should listen carefully to Paul's teachings about unity, service, and love, and apply them to our lives.