ISAIAH 40:8

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

WERE UNITED IN MARRIAGE ON

________________________________________________

AT ____________________________________________

BY ____________________________________________

WITNESSED BY

MAID OF HONOR __________________________________

BEST MAN ______________________________________

ATTENDANTS ____________________________________

_______________________________________________

_______________________________________________

_______________________________________________

THEREFORE SHALL A MAN LEAVE HIS FATHER 
AND HIS MOTHER, AND SHALL CLEAVE UNTO HIS WIFE: 
AND THEY SHALL BE ONE FLESH.
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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**1 Corinthians 6:14**

And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by His own power.
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<th>FAMILY TREE</th>
<th>NAME</th>
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<tr>
<td>HUSBAND</td>
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**PARENTS**

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<tr>
<td>MOTHER</td>
<td>NAME</td>
<td>BIRTHPLACE</td>
<td>DATES</td>
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**GRANDPARENTS**

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**GREAT-GRANDPARENTS**

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# Family Tree

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<td><strong>Mother</strong></td>
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**special memories**

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*O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever.*

**Psalms 118:29**
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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 group-
ings, 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 main-
  tained.

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

2000
Native Americans immigrate to North America from northern Asia; stock breeding and irrigation used in China; Stonehenge, England, a center for religious worship is erected; bellows used in India allowing for higher furnace temperatures

1900
Egyptians use irrigation systems to control Nile floods; spoked wheel invented in the ancient Near East; horses used to pull vehicles

1750
Babylonian mathematicians already understand cube and square root; Hammurabi of Babylon provides first of all legal codes

1700
Egyptian papyrus document describes medical and surgical procedures

1500
Sundials used in Egypt; Mexican Sun Pyramid built

1929
Jacob flees to Haran

1885
Joseph rules Egypt

1898
Joseph sold into slavery

1805
Joseph dies

1915
Joseph born

1865
Joseph rules Egypt

1929
Jacob flees to Haran

2000
Isaac born

2066
Isaac born

2006
Jacob & Esau born

2066
Isaac born

2066
Isaac born

2006
Jacob & Esau born

2000
Native Americans immigrate to North America from northern Asia; stock breeding and irrigation used in China; Stonehenge, England, a center for religious worship is erected; bellows used in India allowing for higher furnace temperatures

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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

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**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

**980**
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

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

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

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

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Celts invade Britain; Assyrians invent inflatable skins for soldiers to cross rivers
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...
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 (\slash\slash) 
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
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, 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.
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME</th>
<th>EXPLANATION</th>
<th>IMPORTANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginnings</td>
<td>Genesis explains the beginning of many important realities: the universe, the earth, people, sin, and God's plan of salvation.</td>
<td>Genesis teaches us that the earth is well made and good. People are special to God and unique. God creates and sustains all life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disobedience</td>
<td>People are always facing great choices. Disobedience occurs when people choose not to follow God's plan of living.</td>
<td>Genesis explains why people are evil: They choose to do wrong. Even great Bible heroes failed God and disobeyed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sin</td>
<td>Sin ruins people’s lives. It happens when we disobey God.</td>
<td>Living God’s way makes life productive and fulfilling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promises</td>
<td>God makes promises to help and protect people. This kind of promise is called a “covenant.”</td>
<td>God kept his promises then, and he keeps them now. He promises to love us, accept us, forgive us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obedience</td>
<td>The opposite of sin is obedience. Obeying God restores our relationship to him.</td>
<td>The only way to enjoy the benefits of God’s promises is to obey him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosperity</td>
<td>Prosperity is deeper than mere material wealth. True prosperity and fulfillment come as a result of obeying God.</td>
<td>When people obey God, they find peace with him, with others, and with themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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. 2 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.

KEY PLACES IN GENESIS

1 Mountains of Ararat
2 Babylon
3 Ur of the Chaldees
4 Haran
5 Shechem
6 Hebron
7 Beer-sheba
8 Bethel
9 Egypt

Modern names and boundaries are shown in gray.

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 Babylon
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
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 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). Abram, 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).

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. 2 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 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 Cities/regions
2 Bible verses
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.
for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. 16 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. 17 And God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light upon the earth, 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. 18 And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

19 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. 20 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.

21 And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. 22 And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

23 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. 24 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.

25 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. 26 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. 27 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.

28 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. 29 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. 30 And God saw that every thing which he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

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)
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.

1:27 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 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.  

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.  

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.

### 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.

#### 1. Adam and Eve

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, 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. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.  

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.

#### The Garden of Eden

The Garden of Eden was a showcase of the magnificent beauty God intended for his creation. Eden was no accident. It is evidence of the design plan God had for the universe, who chooses to give us the mysterious and miraculous gift of life. Value life, as he does.

#### WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT MARRIAGE

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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 work 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.

### Notes

- John 20:22
- Zech 12:1
- Ezek 37:5
- Isa 58:13
- Deut 4:19; 31:17
- Ps 103:14
- Ezek 37:5
- Zech 12:1
- Job 20:22
- 1 Cor 15:45
- Gen 3:23, 13-10
- Isa 51:3
- Ezek 28:13
- Joel 2:3
- Gen 3:22
- Prov 3:18-11:30
- Ezek 47:12
- Rev 2:7, 22:1, 17
- Gen 3:19
- Job 33:4
- Gen 1:11
- Gen 3:19
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- Job 33:4

### References

- Gen 2:18-24
- Gen 24:58-60
- Song of Songs 4:9-10
- Jer 7:17
- Mal 2:14, 15
- Matt 5:32
- Matt 19:6
- Rom 7:2, 3
- Eph 5:21-33
- Eph 5:23-32
- Heb 13:4
became into four heads. 11 The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; 12 and the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. 13 And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. 14 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.

15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 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
18 And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. 19 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. 20 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.

21 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; 22 and the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. 23 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. 24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. 25 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.
And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:
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.

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

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.
4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: 5 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. 6 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. 7 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.

8 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. 9 And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?
10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. 11 And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?

Doubt ......................... Makes you question God’s Word and his goodness
Discouragement ............ Makes you look at your problems rather than at God
Division ........................ 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

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.

3:6 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.

3:8 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).

3:9 Notice what Eve did: She looked, she took, she ate, and then 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).

3:10 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.

3:11 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.

3:12 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.

3:13 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.

3:14–16 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 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.
3:13 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.
3:14 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. 15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and thy seed shall bruise thy head; and thou shalt bruise his heel.

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. 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.

**EVE**

**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, completeness, 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

**Key verse:**
“...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.
the woman, and between thine seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

16 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.

17 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; 18 thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; 19 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.

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

21 Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

22 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:

23 therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. 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.

2. Cain and Abel

Cain kills Abel

And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD. And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. 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. But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And it shall strive with thee, and thou shalt rule over it.

3 And Cain said unto his brother Abel, Let us go into the field. And it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

4 And the LORD said unto Cain, Where art thou? He said, I was innocence. Where is thy brother Abel? He said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? And he said, Thy sin is hid from me.

5 And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? He said, I know not; Am I my brother's keeper? And God said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother Abel is heard from the ground; 6 and his blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the ground; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; 7 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.

8 And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear. 9 If fruitful sheep and fruitful cattle then I shall settle my soul, but if not, I shall die. 10 And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? He said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper? 11 And his brother's blood requireth a reward, and he shall pay for it from the hand of Cain. 12 And the LORD said unto Cain, Why didst thou sin? And he said, The voice of my brother Abel crieth unto me from the ground. 13 And the LORD said unto him, What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. 14 And now art thou cursed from the ground; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; 15 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.
4:8–10

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.

8 And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?

9 And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. 10 And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. 12 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.

11 And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear. 14 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.

15 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. 16 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

17 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. 18 And unto Enoch was born Irad: and Irad begat Mehujael: and Mehujael begat Methusael: and Methusael begat Lamech.

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

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).


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.
18 And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. 20 And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as handle the harp and organ. 22 And Zillah, she also bare Tubal-cain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron: and the sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.

23 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. 24 If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold.

3. Adam's descendants

22 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. 26 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5:25 And Methuselah lived an hundred eighty and seven years, and begat Lamech:

26 And Lamech lived after he begat Lamech seven hundred eighty and two years, and begat sons and daughters:

27 and all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years: and he died.

28 And Lamech lived an hundred eighty and two years, and begat a son:

29 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. 

30 And Lamech lived after he begat Noah five hundred ninety and five years, and begat sons and daughters: 

31 and all the days of Lamech were seven hundred seventy and seven years: and he died.

32 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.

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 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.

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, 2 that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.

3And 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. 4There 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.

5And 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. 6And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. 7And 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. 8But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

9These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God. 10And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

11The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. 12And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

13And 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. 14Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. 15And this is the fashion which thou shalt make of it. The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. 16A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and in the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; and thou shalt make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and in the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it.

17And, 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. 18But 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. 19And 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.

20Of 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. 21And 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.

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

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.

6:4 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

6:2 fair: beautiful.
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. 2 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. 3 Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth. 4 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. 5 And Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him. 6 And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth. 7 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. 8 Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the earth, 9 there went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah. 10 And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth. 11 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. 12 And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights. 13 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; 14 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. 15 And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life. 17 GENESIS 7

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

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

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. And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered. 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: all in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. 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. And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.

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; the fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained; and the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated. And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat. And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth month the waters were abated.

And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged; and the fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained; and the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated. And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat. 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.

And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried. And every living substance was alive, 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: all in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground: the fowls of the heaven also were destroyed from off the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.

8:1 asswaged: subsided. 8:11 abated: lowered.
And God spake unto Noah, saying, 10 Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons’ wives with thee. 11 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. 12 And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons’ wives with him; 13 every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl, and whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their kinds, went forth out of the ark.

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. 14 And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground for man’s sake; for the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every living thing, as I have done. 15 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

And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. 2 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. 3 Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. 4 But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat. 5 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. 6 Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man. 7 And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.

The rainbow

And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, 8 And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; 9 and with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. 10 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.

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: 12 I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. 13 And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud. 14 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. 15 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. 16 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

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

8:16 Gen 7:13
8:17 Gen 1:22
8:20 Gen 4:4; 4:7; 13:18; 22:2
8:21 Gen 3:17
Exod 29:1, 25
Lev 1:9, 13
Isa 54:9
8:22 Ps 74:17

9:1 Gen 1:22
9:2 Gen 1:26-29
Ps 8:6-8
9:3 Ps 104:14
9:4 Lev 3:7, 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
9:16 Exod 20:13, 21:12
Num 35:33
9:17 Exod 20:13, 21:12
Num 35:33

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.
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 wrongly 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.
3. The tower of Babel

And the whole earth was of one language and of one speech. 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. 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. 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.

And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. 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. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. 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

These are the generations of Shem: Shem was an hundred years old, and begat Arphaxad two years after the flood; and Shem lived after he begat Arphaxad five hundred years, and begat sons and daughters.

And Arphaxad lived five and thirty years, and begat Salah; and Arphaxad lived after he begat Salah four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters.

And Salah lived thirty years, and begat Eber; and Salah lived after he begat Eber four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters.

And Eber lived four and thirty years, and begat Peleg; and Eber lived after he begat Peleg four hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters.

And Peleg lived thirty years, and begat Reu; and Peleg lived after he begat Reu two hundred and nine years, and begat sons and daughters.

And Reu lived two and thirty years, and begat Serug; and Reu lived after he begat Serug two hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters.

And Serug lived thirty years, and begat Nahor; and Serug lived after he begat Nahor two hundred years, and begat sons and daughters.

11:12 left off ceased.

BIBLE NATIONS DESCENDED FROM NOAH’S SONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shem</th>
<th>Ham</th>
<th>Japheth</th>
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<td>Hebrews</td>
<td>Canaanites</td>
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<td>Chaldeans</td>
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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.

The plain between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers offered a perfect location for the city and tower, “whose top may reach unto heaven.”
And Nahor lived nine and twenty years, and begat Terah: and Nahor lived after he begat Terah an hundred and nineteen years, and begat sons and daughters.

And Terah lived seven years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot. And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees. 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 Iscah. But Sarai was barren; she had no child.

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. And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran.

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

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: 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.

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. 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. And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land.

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.
And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and he builded an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him. 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 he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD. And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south. 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. 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: 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. 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. And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair. The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels. And the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife. 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? 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. 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

And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south. And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. 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; unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD.
5And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. 6And 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. 7And 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.

8And 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. 9Is 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.

10And 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. 11Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan: and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.

12Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. 13But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.

14And 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: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.

15And 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. 16Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.

17Then Abram removed that camp, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD.

Abraham rescues Lot

14And 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; 2that these made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar. 3All these were joined together in the vale of Siddim, which is the Salt Sea. 4Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

5And 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, 6and the Horites in their mount Seir, unto El-paran, which is by the wilderness. 7And 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.

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 him in the vale of Siddim; 9with 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. 10And the vale of Siddim was full of slime pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there; and they that remained fled to the mountain. 11And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way. 12And they took Lot, Abram’s brother’s son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed. 13And 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. 14And 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 until he overtook them in the vale of Siddim; 15And 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; and they joined battle with them at the vale of Shaveh, which is the vale of Zoar. 16And they divided the land unto the five kings round about into the vale of Shaveh. 17Then they turned back, and came to En-mishpat, which is Kadesh, and smote Sidon, and Hoba the Amorite, and Zepho the Amorite, and Jasus, and Adak, and Yzo, king of Eshcol. 18And they took all the substance, both money, and spoil, and all the chooses of the vale, even ten thousand rams, and seven thousand sheep, 19And five kings of the nations, the kings of the Amorites in the high land, the king of Goiim, the king of Egypt, the king of Assyria, and the king of Sodom, came to help one another, and were divided in the vale of Shaveh. 20And they fought with them at En-mishpat: and there they were called Kadesh. 21And they called the name of the place Hormah: because they said, Shall he also enslave us as they did Egypt? and shall he enslave us as Caanan? 22And the king of Egypt came not. So they called the name of the place Hormah: 23And the king of Sodom gave unto Abram lot, and the vineyard, and the cities, and the fields of Sodom and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboiim, even as far as the river of Egypt. 24So he released Lot, when he had parted from him: and Abram said unto his men, and unto Lot, and unto his men, Part ye to the left, and I will go to the right: for our substances are much, and we shall make an offence to the inhabitants of the land toward which we go. 25Go thy way: turn thee to thy own way, I will go to mine. 26And there was a very great and fierce struggle between them that dwelt in the vale of Shaveh: for the herdsmen were there: and they were not able to help Lot. 27And it came to pass, when all the men of the land of Sodom were assembled together, viz. all the herdsmen of the land, and four and twenty kings that were joined together with the king of Sodom, at the entering in of the valley which is before the平原 of Shaveh. 28And they called unto the men of Lot, and said unto them, Give up him, and we will not touch thee. Be as men to us, live thou among us: but if thou wilt not, this is the manner of death that shall come upon thee. 29And they said unto Lot, Who is he that hath taken away our brother, to slay him with such fierce violence? 30And they answered them, Come in, ye brethren; save yourselves; or else we will take you as we have taken Lot, and bring you unto our brother to live with us. 31And they said, Behold, he hath said unto us pleasant words: shall we indeed take our brother, and slay an angel of the Lord? 32Be it far from us to do such a thing as this: to slay any man, being an upright man, which is one that is known to us. 33Now the name of the Lord’s angel was Jehovah. 34And they said, This shall be our oath also: if ye will not tell us of this thing, but will do unto us unlike unto this oath, 35then, when we come and see the face of this city, and we have known it, and are sure, that we shall take it; Then dost thou help us, and we will give unto thee of the spoil of the land, of the wares that we shall take with us. 36And Lot fled, and fell there; and they that remained fled to the mountain. And they called upon the name of the Lord, and cried, and said, Deliver us out of the hand of these Gentile men. 37And the Lord sent forth an utter destruction upon the city, and upon all that was therein, and upon all the meadows, and upon all the trees, and upon all the fruit trees round about. 38And Lot’s wife looked back from behind, and was turned into a pillar of salt. 39And Lot went forth, and talked with his two daughters, saying, Go ye out from this place, and flee to the hill country of Zoar; or else ye shall be consumed in the punishment of all the land. 40And he Sampler, and Lot parted from his father. 41And Lot went unto the hill country of Zoar, and dwelt there: and the men of Sodom and Gomorrah took Lot, and his daughters, and brought them into the city toSeleccione, and they did the punishment of all the land. 42And Lot was a righteous man, because he dwelt among wicked men: and he was distressed from their behaviour. 43And he said unto them, Save me, I pray, from this city, lest it be consumed. 44Lest my soul be taken into sin with them, and I should die with all the wicked. 45And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters: the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; and brought them forth out of the city, and delivered them into the hand of them that they consented; and they brought them forth forth, and set them without the city.” (Genesis 19:16).
unto Dan. 15 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. 16 And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.

17 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.

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

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

22 And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth, 23 that I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatch, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldst say, I have made Abram rich: 24 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.

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.

2 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? 3 And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.

4 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. 5 And he brought him 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.

14:15 himself: his forces. smote: attacked. 14:17 dale: valley. 14:23 shoelatch: shoe lace. 15:2 steward: heir. 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 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.

14:20n 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.


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 thy 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.

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6 And he believed in the **Lord**, and he counted it to him for righteousness.
7 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.
8 And he said, **Lord** God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?
9 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.
10 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.
11 And when the fowls came down upon the carcases, Abram drove them away.
12 And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him.
13 And when he looked up he beheld three men: and Abram fell down on his face.
14 And he said unto him, I am the **Lord** the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: he shall inherit the land.
15 And he said, **Lord**, give unto me children indeed, wherefore should I die, being old?
16 And **the Lord** said unto Abram, Wherefore hast thou dealt this way with thy servant? for **the **Lord** will make thee to go from hence to the land which I have sworn to give unto thy seed.
17 And **he said unto him, They shall surely **come** to **me**; that they may live, and multiply, and so fill the earth.
18 And **he said unto him, I will make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing;** for through thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.
19 **And in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.**
20 Then Abram fell down on his face, and **he said unto **the Lord**, **Look now toward heaven, and tell the **Lord** of heaven, if I am but a **seven-fool**.
21 **Shall** one **seven-fold** of thy servant be received in judgment? would God that I **were** dust and ashes. **Ps 106:31**
22 **Rom 4:3, 9, 22**
23 **Gal 3:6**
24 **15:7**
25 Gen 12:1; 13:17
26 15:8
27 Luke 1:18
28 **15:9**
29 Lev 1:14
30 15:10
31 Lev 1:17
32 15:13
33 Exod 12:40
34 Acts 7:6
35 Gal 3:17

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**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.

**15:8** 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; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.

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. 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:


Abraham's second wife

Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. 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. 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. And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.

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.

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.

And the angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur. And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai.

And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Return unto thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands; for the 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.

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.

Sarah 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.

Sarah 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.

Although Sarah 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.)

Sarah 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.

Hagar was running away from her mistress and her problem. The angel of the Lord gave her this advice: (1) to return...
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? Wherefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered.

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

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.

Strengthen 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
- 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.
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. 2 And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. 3 And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, 4 As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. 5 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. 6 And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. 7 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. 8 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.

9 And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee. 10 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. 11 And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. 12 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. 13 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. 14 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.

15 And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. 16 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.

17 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? 18 And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!

19 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. 20 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. 21 But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year. 22 And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.

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 Sarah 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.
23 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. 24 And Abraham was ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. 25 And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. 26 In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son. 27 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 And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; 2 and he lift 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.

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

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. 3 and said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: 4 let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: 5 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 thy servant.

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

6 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. 7 And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it. 8 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.

9 And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife?

And he said, Behold, in the tent.

10 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 laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?

11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age: and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. 12 Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?

13 And the Lord said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? 14 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.

15 Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid.

And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.

16 And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way. 17 And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do? 18 Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? 19 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

20 And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; 21 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.

22 And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the Lord. 23 And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? 24 Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? 25 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? 18:25 pass not away: do not pass by. 18:12 waxed: grown. lord: husband. 18:13 of a surely: surely. 18:19 and judgment: righteousness and justice. 18:24 peradventure: suppose.

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 communication problem I’m having too hard for him?” “Is this habit I’m trying to break too hard for him?” “Is this practice for my church breaking 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. 18:28–33 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 also knew from experience that God is merciful to sinners. 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 ignoring 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,
26 And the Lord said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.
27 And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes: 28 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.
29 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.
30 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.
31 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.

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

**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.
32 And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Per-adventure ten shall be found there.

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

33 And the Lord went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place.

God rescues Lot

19 And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot saw them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground;

and he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, into your servant’s house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall arise up early, and go on your ways.

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

3 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.

4 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: 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.

5 And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him. 7 and said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly. 8 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.

9 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. 10 But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door. 11 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.

12 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: 13 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.

14 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.

15And 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. 16And 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. 17And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape, go not into the city, go flee from the city, take ye your way into the mountains; for this city shall be destroyed. 18And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord: 19behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight: and I will now flee unto the mountain, lest I die: 20behold 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. 21And 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. 22Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar. 23The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. 24Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; 25and he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. 26But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt. 27And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD: 28and 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. 29And 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 30And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; 31for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters. 32And 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: 33come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. 34And 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. 35And 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. 36And 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 22:20; 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.
Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father. And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same is the father of the Moabites unto this day. 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

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

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.

But Abimelech had not come near her: and he said, Lord, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation? 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.

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. 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.

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. 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. And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing?

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. 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. 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.

And Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants, and gave them unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife. And Abimelech said, Behold, my land is before thee: dwell where it pleaseth thee. 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 reproved.

So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants; and they bare children. For the Lord had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah Abraham's wife.

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 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 pattern of living 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
5. Birth and near sacrifice of Isaac

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

6 And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me.

7 And she said, Who could have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? for I have born him a son in his old age.

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

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.
Hagar and Ishmael sent away

8And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned.
9And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking.
10Wherefore 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. 11And the thing was very grievous in Abraham’s sight because of his son.
12And 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. 13And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed.
14And 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. 15And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs. 16And 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.
17And 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. 18Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation.
19And 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.
20And God was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer.
21And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.

A treaty by a well

22And it came to pass at that time, that Abimelech and Phichol the chief captain of his host spake unto Abraham, saying, God is with thee in all that thou doest: 23 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.
24And Abraham said, I will swear. 25And Abraham reproved Abimelech because of a well of water, which Abimelech’s servants had violently taken away.
26And Abimelech said, I wot not who hath done this thing: neither didst thou tell me, neither yet heard I of it, but today. 27And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech; and both of them made a covenant. 28And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves.
29And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What mean these seven ewe lambs which thou hast set by themselves?
30And he said, These seven ewe lambs shall be for a witness unto me, that I have digged this well; 31Wherefore he called that place Beer-sheba; because there they sware both of them.
32Thus they made a covenant at Beer-sheba: then Abimelech rose up, and Phichol the chief captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines. 33And Abraham planted a grove in Beer-sheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God.
34And Abraham sojourned in the Philistines’ land many days.

21:8 1 Sam 1:23
21:9 Gal 4:29
21:10 Gal 4:30
21:12 Rom 9:7
21:13 Heb 11:18
21:14 Gen 16:1
21:16 Jer 6:26
21:17 Exod 3:7
21:18 Deut 26:7
21:19 Ps 6:8
21:20 Gen 26:24
21:21 Gen 28:15
21:22 Gen 26:26
21:23 Gen 24:3
21:25 Gen 26:15
21:27 Gen 26:31
21:30 Gen 31:44
21:31 Gen 21:14; 26:33
21:33 Isa 9:6; 40:28

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.
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.

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.

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. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. 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.

God tests Abraham's obedience

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.

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.
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. 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?

And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.

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. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son.

And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham. And he said, Here am I.

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.

And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and beheld 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. 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.

And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, 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 beloved son, Isaac.

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 greatest possible sin (Leviticus 20:1–5). God did not want 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.

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).

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.

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
And Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spake unto the sons of Heth, saying, I 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.

And the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying unto him, 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.

And Abraham stood up, and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth. 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, 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.

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, 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.

And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land. 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.

And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him, 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. 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.

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 unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city.

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. 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.
6. Isaac marries Rebekah

24 And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. 2And 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: 3and 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: 4but thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac. 5And 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? 6And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again.

7And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter. 8And he took the 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. 9And 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. 10And 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. 11Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: 12and 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. 13And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who had drawn water out of the well; for she was the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor. 14And she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up.

15And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave it him to drink, and immediately drew for all his camels. 16And 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. 17And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, draw a little water of thy pitcher. 18And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave it him to drink. 19And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking. 20And she hasted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels. 21And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not.
24:22. 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; 24:23 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 And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor. 24:25 She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in. 24:26 And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD. 24:27 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. 24:28 And the damsel ran, and told them of her mother's house these things. 24:29 And Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban: and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well. 24:30 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. 24:31 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. 24:32 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. 24:33 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 And he said, I am Abraham's servant. 24:35 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. 24:36 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. 24:37 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: 24:38 but thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son. 24:39 And I said unto my master, Peradventure the woman will not follow me. 24:40 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: 24:41 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. 24:42 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: 24:43 behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come provender: feed. 24:32 ungirted: unloaded.

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.

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
they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master.

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. 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. 47And 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

And they said, We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth. And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.

And they sent away Rebekah her sister, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men. 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.

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.

And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahai-roi; for he dwelt in the south country. 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. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us?

And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a veil, and covered herself. And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done. 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.

Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah. And she bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah. And Jokshan begat Sheba, and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, and Letushim, and Leummim. And the sons of Midian; Ephah, and Epher, and Hanoch, and Abidah, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah.

And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac. 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.
And these are the days of the years of Abraham’s life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years. 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. 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; the field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth: there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife. And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac; and Isaac dwelt by the well Lahai-roi. Now these are the generations of Ishmael, Abraham’s son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah’s handmaid, bare unto Abraham: 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, and Mishma, and Dumah, and Massa, Hadar, and Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah: these are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their towns, and by their castles; twelve princes according to their nations. 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. 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.

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

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

And these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham’s son: Abraham begat Isaac. 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. And Isaac intreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. 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.

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.

And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb.

And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau. 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.

Esau sells his birthright

And these are the generations of Esau, Isaac’s son: Esau was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Beersheba of the children of Canaan.

And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents.

And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison; but Rebekah loved Jacob.

And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint; 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.

And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright.

And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?

And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob.

And Esau sold his birthright for a pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way; thus Esau despised his birthright.

2. Isaac and King Abimelech

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.

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.

Esau sounds like the Hebrew word for “hair.”

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.

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.

The Philistines would become some of Israel’s fiercest enemies. Philistine means “sea people,” for they originally were...
2 And the LORD appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of: 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 sware unto Abraham thy father; 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; because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.

Isaac deceives the king

6 And Isaac dwelt in Gerar: 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 me for Sarah was fair to look upon. 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

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 20:1–6). 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. 8 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. 9 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.

10 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. 11 And Abimelech charged all his people, saying, He that toucheth this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.

Isaac refuses to fight

12 Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the Lord blessed him. 13 And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great: 14 for he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants: and the Philistines envied him. 15 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. 16 And Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us; for thou art much mightier than we.

17 And Isaac departed hence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there. 18 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. 19 And Isaac's servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing water. 20 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. 21 And they digged another well, and strove for that also: and he called the name of it Sitnah. 22 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.

23 And he went up from thence to Beer-sheba. 24 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. 25 And he built 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 Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar, and Ahuzzath one of his friends, and Phichol the chief captain of his army. 27 And Isaac said unto them, Wherefore come ye to me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you?

28 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; 29 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.

And he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink. 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.

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. And he called it Shebah: therefore the name of the city is Beer-sheba unto this day.

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

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 9:31–13; 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

And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite. Which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah.

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.

And he said unto him, Behold, here am I. And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death:

1And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt for venison, and to bring it. And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying, Bring me venison, and make me savoury meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before the LORD before my death. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee. 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: and thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death.

2And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man: 3my 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.

4And his mother said unto him, Upon me be thy curse, my son: only obey my voice, and go fetch me them. 5And he went, and fetched, and brought them to his mother: and his mother made savoury meat, such as his father loved. 6And Rebekah took goodly raiment and the best food, and put them upon Jacob her son: and gave the savoury meat and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.

7And he came unto his father, and said, My father. And he said, Here am I, who art thou, my son? 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.

8And 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.

9And 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. 10And 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. 11And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: so he blessed him.

12And he said, Art thou my very son Esau?


28:34, 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.

27:18 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.
25 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.

26 And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son. 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: 27 therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine:

28 and 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.

29 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. 30 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.

32 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.

35 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?

38 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.

39 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;

40 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.

41 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.

42 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 break his yoke from off thy neck.

43 And he also had made savoury meat, and brought it unto his father, and said, Let my father arise, and eat of his son’s venison, that thy soul may bless me.

44 And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son. 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:

45 and thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing.

46 And he said, Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing.

47 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?

48 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?

49 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;

50 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.

51 And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son. 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: therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine:

52 and 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.

33 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. 43 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran; and tarry with him a few days, until thy brother’s fury turn away; 45 until thy brother’s anger turn away from thee, and he forget that which thou hast done to him: then will I send, and fetch thee from thence: why should I be deprived also of you both in one day?

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 eldest 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.
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.

28:10 And Jacob called, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. 2Arise, 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. 3And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; 4and 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. 5And 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.

6When 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; 7and that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Padan-aram; 8and Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father; 9then 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.

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

10And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran. 11And 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. 12And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and he saw the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

13And, 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; 14and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. 15And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whithersoever 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.

16And Jacob awoke out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. 17And 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.

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. 19And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first. 20And 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, 21 so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: 22 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.

J acob meets Rachel

29 Then Jacob went on his journey, and came into the land of the people of the east. 2And 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. 3And 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.

4And Jacob said unto them, My brethren, whence be ye? And they said, Of Haran are we. 5And he said unto them, Know ye Laban the son of Nahor? And they said, We know him. 6And he said unto them, Is he well? And they said, He is well: and, behold, Rachel his daughter cometh with the sheep. 7And 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. 8And 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.

9And while he yet spake with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep: for she kept them. 10And 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. 11And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept. 12And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's brother, and that he was Rebekah's son: and she ran and told her father.

J acob marries two sisters

13And 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. 14And Laban said to him, Surely thou art my bone and my flesh. And he abode with him the space of a month.

15And Laban said unto Jacob, Because thou art my brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for nought? tell me, what shall thy wages be? 16And Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. 17Leah was tender eyed; but Rachel was beautiful and well favoured.

18And Jacob loved Rachel; and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter.

19And Laban said, It is better that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man: abide with me. 20And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her.

21And 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. 22And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first. 23And 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, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: 24 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.
21 And Jacob said unto Laban, Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in unto her. 22 And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast. 23 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. 24 And Laban gave unto his daughter Leah Zilpah his maid for an handmaid. 25 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?

26 And Laban said, It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. 27 Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years.

28 And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week: and he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife also. 29 And Laban gave to Rachel his daughter Bilhah his handmaid to be her maid. 30 And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served with him yet seven other years.

31 Jacob's many sons

32 And when the Lord saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb: but Rachel was barren.

33 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. 34 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. 35 And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Now this time will my husband be jointed unto me, because I have born him three sons: therefore was his name called Levi. 36 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.

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. 2 And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel: and he said, Am I in God's stead, who hath withholden from thee the fruit of the womb?

3 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. 4 And she gave him Bilhah her handmaid to wife: and Jacob went in unto her. 5 And Bilhah conceived, and bare Jacob a son. 6 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. 7 And Bilhah Rachel's maid conceived again, and bare Jacob a second son. 8 And Rachel said, With great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed: and she called his name Naphtali.

9 When Leah saw that she had left bearing, she took Zilpah her maid, and gave her Jacob to wife. 10 And Zilpah Leah's maid bare Jacob a son. 11 And Leah said, A troop cometh: and she called his name Gad. 12 And Zilpah Leah's maid bare Jacob a second son. 13 And Leah said, Happy am I, for the daughters will call me blessed: and she called his name Asher.
14 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.

15 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.

16 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.

17 And God hearkened unto Leah, and she conceived, and bare Jacob the fifth son.

18 And Leah said, God hath given me my hire, because I have given my maiden to my husband: and she called his name Issachar.

19 And Leah conceived again, and bare Jacob the sixth son.

20 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.

21 And afterwards she bare a daughter, and called her name Dinah.

22 And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb.
And she conceived, and bare a son; and said, God hath taken away my reproach: and she called his name Joseph; and said, The Lord shall add to me another son.

J acob becomes wealthy
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. 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.

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. And he said, Appoint me thy wages, and I will give it.

And he said unto him, Thou knowest how I have served thee, and how thy cattel was with me. 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?

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. 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. 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.

And Laban said, Behold, I would it might be according to thy word. 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. And he set three days' journey betwixt himself and Jacob: and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks.

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. 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. And the flocks conceived before the rods, and brought forth cattle ringstraked, speckled, and spotted. 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.

And it came to pass, whencesoever 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. But when the cattle were feeble, he put them not in: so the feebleer were Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's. And the man increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maidservants, and menservants, and camels, and asses.

J acob returns home
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. And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and, behold, it was not toward him as before. And the Lord said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee.

And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field unto his flock, 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. And ye know that with all my power I have served your father. And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him this day to return unto me.

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 These idols were called teraphim, and they were thought not to hurt me. 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. 9Thus God hath taken away the cattle of your father, and given them to me. 10And 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 grisled. 11And the angel of God spake unto me in a dream, saying, Jacob: And I said, Here am I. 12And he said, Lift up now thine eyes, and see, all the rams which leap upon the cattle are ringstraked, speckled, and grisled: for I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee. 13I 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. 14And Rachel and Leah answered and said unto him, Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? 15Are we not counted of him strangers? for he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money. 16For 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.

### Laban pursues Jacob

Then Jacob rose up, and set his sons and his wives upon camels; 18and 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. 19And Laban went to shear his sheep: and Rachel had stolen the images that were her father's. 20And Jacob stole away unawares to Laban the Syrian, in that he told him not that he fled. 21So he fled with all that he had; and he rose up, and passed over the river, and set his face toward the mount Gilead. 22And it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob was fled. 23And he took his brethren with him, and pursued after him seven days' journey; and they overtook him in the mount Gilead. 24And 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. 25Then Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mount: and Laban with his brethren pitched in the mount of Gilead. 26And 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 | grisled: 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.

- **ZILPAH**
  - Leah's servant
  - **GAD**
  - **ASHER**
- **LEAH**
  - Reuben
  - Simeon
  - Levi
  - Judah
  - Issachar
  - Zebulun
  - Dan
  - Naphtali
- **RACHEL**
  - Bilhah
    - Dan
    - Naphtali
  - **GAD**
  - **ASHER**
- **BENJAMIN**
- **DINAH** (only daughter)
- **JOSEPH**
- **JUDAH**
- **LEVI**
- **SIMON**
- **SIMEON**
- **ISSACHAR**
- **ZEBULUN**
- **NEPHIL**

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? 27 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? 28 And hast not suffered me to kiss my sons and my daughters? thou hast now done foolishly in so doing. 29 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 speake not to Jacob either good or bad. 30 And now, though thou wouldest needs be gone, because thou sore longedst after thy father's house, yet wherefore hast thou stolen my gods? 31 And Jacob answered and said to Laban, Because I was afraid: for I said, Peradventure thou wouldest take by force thy daughters from me. 32 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. 33 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. 34 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. 35 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. 36 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? 37 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. 38 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. 39 That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee: I bare the loss of it; if of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night. 40 Thus I was: in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes. 41 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. 42 Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely thou hast sent me away now empty. God hath seen mine affliction and the labour of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight.

43 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? 44 Now therefore come thou, let us make a covenant, I and thou; and let it be for a witness between me and thee. 45 And Jacob took a stone, and set it up for a pillar. 46 And Jacob said unto his brethren, Gather stones; and they took stones, and made an heap: and they did eat there upon the heap. 47 And Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha: but Jacob called it Galeed. 48 And Laban said, This heap is a witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called


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.
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.

32:1 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—27:46). 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.
6And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and he came to meet thee, and four hundred men with him. 7Then 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: 8And said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape. 9And 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: 10I 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. 11Deliver 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. 12And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.

13And he lodged there that same night; and took of that which came to his hand a present for Esau his brother: 14two hundred he goats, and twenty goats, two hundred ewes, and twenty rams, 15thirty milch camels with their colts, forty kine, and ten bulls, twenty she asses, and ten foals. 16And 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. 17And 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? 18Then 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. 19And 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. 20And 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; and peradventure he will accept of me. 21So went the present over before him: and himself lodged that night in the company.

22And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two womenservants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok. 23And he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over that he had. 24And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. 25And 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. 26And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. 27And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. 28And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. 29And 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.

30And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. 31And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. 32And as he passed over Penuel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh. 33Therefore the children of Israel eat not sinew that shrank. 34And he continued all night wrestling, until the breaking of the day. 35And all the sinews of Jacob's thigh were out of joint, betwixt the hip and the hollow of his thigh, unto this day: because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank.
33:1 The brothers make peace

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. And he put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindermost. And he passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

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 his 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

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.
4And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept. 5And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children; and said, Who are those with thee?
And he said, The children which God hath graciously given thy servant. 6Then the handmaids came near, they and their children, and they bowed themselves. 7And Leah also with her children came near, and bowed themselves: and after came Joseph near and Rachel, and they bowed themselves.
8And he said, What meanest thou by all this drove which I met?
And he said, These are to find grace in the sight of my lord.
9And Esau said, I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself.
10And 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. 11Take, 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.
12And he said, Let us take our journey, and let us go, and I will go before thee.
13And 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. 14Let 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.
15And 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. 16So Esau returned that day on his way unto Seir. 17And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built him an house, and made booths for his cattle: therefore the name of the place is called Succoth.
18And 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. 19And 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. 20And he erected there an altar, and called it El-elohe-Israel.

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. 2And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and defiled her. 3And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly unto the damsel. 4And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife.

33:4 drove: group. 34:3 clave: was strongly attracted.
5 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. 6 And Hamor the father of Shechem went out unto Jacob to commune with him. 7 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. 8 And Hamor communed with them, saying, The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter: I pray you give her him to wife. 9 And make ye marriages with us, and give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you. 10 And ye shall dwell with us: and the land shall be before you; dwell and trade ye therein, and get you possessions therein.

11 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. 12 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. 13 And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully, and said, because he had defiled Dinah their sister: 14 and they said unto them, We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised; for that thing ought not to be done. 15 But in this will we consent unto you: If ye will be as we be, that every male of you be circumcised: 16 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. 17 But if ye will not hearken unto us, to be circumcised; then will we take our daughter, and we will be gone.

18 And their words pleased Hamor, and Shechem Hamor’s son. 19 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.

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
- Thoughtless avengers often hurt the original victims a second time
- Family members can be trampled in the rush for family honor

Lessons from her life:

- Where: Padan-aram

Vital statistics:

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.
20And Hamor and Shechem his son came unto the gate of their city, and communed with the men of their city, saying, 21These 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. 22Only 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. 23Shall 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. 24And 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.

25And 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. 26And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went out. 27The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister. 28They took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which was in the city, and that which was in the field, 29and all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives took they captive, and spoiled even all that was in the house.

30And 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.

31And they said, Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?

Rachel and Isaac die

35And 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.

2Then 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: 3and 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. 4And 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.

34:20 communed: spoke.
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. So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan, that is, Bethel, he and all the people that were with him. 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. But Deborah Rebekah's nurse died, and she was buried beneath Bethel under an oak: and the name of it was called Allon-bachuth.

And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padan-aram, and blessed him. 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. 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; and the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land. And God went up from him in the place where he talked with him. 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. And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, Bethel.

And they journeyed from Bethel; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour. 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. 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. And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem. And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave: that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day.

And Israel journeyed, and spread his tent beyond the tower of Edar. 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: the sons of Leah; Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, and Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Zebulun: and the sons of Rachel; Joseph, and Benjamin: and the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid; Dan, and Naphtali: 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.

And Jacob came unto Isaac his father unto Mamre, unto the city of Arbah, which is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac sojourned. And the days of Isaac were an hundred and fourscore years.

And Jacob 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

Now these are the generations of Esau, who is Edom. 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; and Basemath Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nebajoth. And Adah bare to Esau Eliphaz; and Basemath bare Reuel; and Aholibamah bare Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah: these are the sons of Esau, which were born unto him in the land of Canaan.

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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.

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.
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. 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. Thus dwelt Esau in mount Seir: Esau is Edom.

And these are the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites in mount Seir: 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. And the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, and Gatam, and Kenaz.

And Timna was concubine to Eliphaz Esau’s son; and she bare to Eliphaz Amalek: these were the sons of Adah Esau’s wife.

And these are the sons of Reuel; Nahath, and Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah: these were the sons of Basemath Esau’s wife.

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.

And these are the sons of Eliphaz in the land of Edom; these were the sons of Adah.

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 Eliphaz in the land of Edom; these were the sons of Adah.

And these are the sons of Reuel; 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.

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.

These are the sons of Seir the Horite, who inhabited the land: Lotan, and Shobal, and Zibeon, and Anah, and Dishon, and Ezer, and Dishan: these are the dukes of the Horites, the children of Seir in the land of Edom.

And these are the dukes that came of the Horites; duke Lotan, duke Shobal, duke Zibeon, duke Anah, duke Dishon, duke Ezer, duke Dishan: these are the dukes that came of Hor in the land of Seir, among their dukes in the land of Seir.

And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel. And Bela the son of Beor reigned in Edom: and the name of his city was Dinhabah. And Bela died, and Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his stead. And Jobab died, and Husham of the land of Temani reigned in his stead. 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. And Hadad died, and Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his stead. And Samlah died, and Saul of Rehoboth by the river reigned in his stead. And Saul died, and Baal-hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his stead. 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.

6:9 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.

6:15f The title “duke” is equivalent to “head of the clan.”
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, 41 duke Aholibamah, duke Elah, duke Pinon, 42 duke Kenaz, duke Teman, duke Mibzar, 43 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

And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan. 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. 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. 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.

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

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.
Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it to his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: '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. 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. 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. 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? And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying.

And his brethren went to feed their father’s flock in Shechem. And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem? come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said to him, Here am I. 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.

And a certain man found him, and, behold, this dreamer cometh. And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And he said, I seek my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they feed. And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer commeth.

Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into this pit that we may hide them from the sight of the world. And they conspired against him to slay him. And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh.

And he was wandering in the field: and the man found him, and, behold, this dreamer cometh. And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him. 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.

And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stripped Joseph out of his coat of many colours that was on him; and they took him, and cast him into a pit that was empty; there was no water in it. And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmaelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt. And Judah said to his brethren, What profit is it if Joseph is dead? What profit is it if he be slain in battle? What profit is it if we divide the inheritance of our brethren? Come, and let us sell him for silver; let us cast lots; the price is good; let us take him, and sell him to the Ishmaelites and let him go up to them.

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).

Joseph’s 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
if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? 27 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. 28 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.

29 And Reuben returned unto the pit; and, behold, Joseph was not in the pit; and he rent his clothes. 30 And he returned unto his brethren, and said, The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?

31 And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood; 32 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.

33 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. 34 And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. 35 And all his sons and all his daughters rose up

37:28
Gen 39:1; 45:4-5
Lev 27:2
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

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.
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.

36 And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, and captain of the guard.

2. Judah and Tamar

38 And it came to pass at that time, that Judah went down from his brethren, and turned to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah. 2 And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanitish, whose name was Shuah; and he took her, and went in unto her. 3 And she conceived, and bare a son; and he called his name Er. 4 And she conceived again, and bare a son; and she called his name Onan. 5 And she yet again conceived, and bare a son; and called his name Shelah: and he was at Chezib, when she bare him.

6 And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, whose name was Tamar. 7 And Er, Judah's first-born, was wicked in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord slew him. 8 And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother. 9 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. 10 And the thing which he did displeased the Lord: wherefore he slew him also.

11 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.

12 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. 13 And it was told Tamar, saying, Behold thy father in law goeth up to Timnath to shear his sheep. 14 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. 15 When Judah saw her, he thought her to be an harlot; because she had covered her face. 16 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.)

And she said, What will thou give me, that thou mayest come in unto me?

38:11 peradventure: perhaps.
38:17
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?
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. And she arose, and went away, and laid by her veil from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood.
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. 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.
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.
And Judah said, Let her take it to her, lest we be shamed: behold, I sent this kid, and thou hast not found her.
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 whomredom.
And Judah said, Bring her forth, and let her be burnt.
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.
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.
And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that, behold, twins were in her womb.
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.
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.
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
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. And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the Lord was with Joseph, and that he was wise in all his ways.
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.
38:1 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 candelsticks. 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. 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. 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. 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. And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. 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; 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?

And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie with her, or to be with her.

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. 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.

And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth, 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: 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.

And she laid up his garment by her, until his lord came home. 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: and it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled out.

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. 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. But the Lord was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. 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. 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

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. And Pharaoh was wroth against two of his officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers. And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound. And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them: and they continued a season in ward.

And Joseph went in unto them in the prison, and saw them, and spake unto them, and said, Even as I spake unto you, saying, The Lord shall shew his will unto you. And the butler brought in his master's cup, and filled it with wine, and brought up his master's bread; but the baker brought in the bread of his master. And it came to pass, as I spake unto you, and as I stood before you, and spake unto you, the same thing did happen to me: for the chief of the butlers and the chief of the bakers did unto them, as they did unto me; for the Lord did shew his will unto all of us.

Joseph interpreted the dreams of the butler, saying, The word of Pharaoh will fall on you: behold, the cup is in the hand of the butler; then shall you say, I made the dream to be against you. But the word of the chief of the butlers was against me; because I did not fall on him in my dream. The butler told Pharaoh all these words, saying, I did find favour in my master's sight; and he committed unto me all the business of the house; and all my master knew of us was committed unto me: from the vessels of silver and gold, and all that was in the house, from me was kept. And I knew, when I stood before my master, that there was according to my hands, and that I had found favour in my master's sight.

Now it came to pass the third day in the morning, that which Pharaoh spake unto his servants was true: then said he unto his servants, Call unto me my butler and my baker.

And it was so, when Pharaoh had called Joseph thither, that he said unto him, Say unto Pharaoh, Before I speak, I pray thee, that I may know the cause whereof I stand before thee.

And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, Thy servants did commit a great trespass: for which cause the chief of the butlers and the chief of the bakers did put their hands upon their heads. And their two dreams were according unto their ages, because it went forward and backward in their dreams unto me: and I knew they were vexing themselves for this; wherefore, as I spake unto Pharaoh, so let it be also unto his servants: that the dreams of Pharaoh may be according to their words; as I spake unto Pharaoh.

And it came to pass before Joseph spoke unto his brethren, the butler and the baker of Pharaoh, which were imprisoned, spake to him with great anger, and said, Make mention of us not to Pharaoh, neither give mention of us in all the house of Egypt.

And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, A certain man came unto me, saying, Make mention unto Pharaoh, saying, Before I speak, I pray thee, that I may know the cause whereof I stand before thee.

And he said unto him, Say this also unto Pharaoh, When thou goest in unto Pharaoh, say unto him, Thus saith Joseph, Before I came unto Pharaoh, they told me, Behold, the dreams of both the butlers and the baker are come to pass. And he spake unto him according to these words, saying, Thus saith Joseph, Before I came unto thee, these dreams were come to pass unto thy brethren; to say, Behold, we saw dreams, every one's dream was according to his age. And it came to pass, when Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, Tell me, what is your occupation? 

And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream cannot be known to any man but the diviner; for it is hard to explain.

And Joseph continued, and spake unto Pharaoh, Lo, I have done according to thy word: Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I make thee master over the house of Egypt, and all my people shall be servants unto thee: only in the land of the priests, and in the royal household, shall thou not be master; for in these they are a peculiar people, and I will make the king's son master over them.

And as for the corn which is in the land, let him gather it together into one place, under my hand, that it may be kept for food for the land.

And as for the land of Egypt, it shall not be reckoned among the land of Pharaoh; it shall be a possession for Joseph, and shall be a possession of the house of Israel, a possession by lot. And the sons of Israel shall be fruitful in the land, and they shall multiply, and become mighty, and fill the land.
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. And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and looked upon them, and, behold, they were sad. And he asked Pharaoh's officers that were in the ward of his lord's house, saying, Wherefore look ye so sadly today? 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, I pray you. And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, In my dream, behold, a vine was before me; 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: 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.

And Joseph said unto him, This is the interpretation of it: The three branches are three 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.

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.
GENESIS 41
41 And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed: and, behold, he stood by the river. 2And, behold, there came up out of the river seven well favoured kine and fatfleshed; and they fed in a meadow. 3And, behold, seven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill favoured and leanfleshed; and stood by the brink of the river. 4And the ill favoured and leanfleshed kine did eat up the seven wellfavoured and fat kine. So Pharaoh awoke. 5And he slept and dreamed the second time: and, behold, seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, rank and good. 6And, behold, seven thin ears and blasted with the east wind sprung up after them. 7And the seven thin ears devoured the seven rank and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and, behold, it was a dream. 8And 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 it: and I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it.

9Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day; 10Pharaoh was wroth with his servants, and put me in ward in the captain of the guard’s house, both me and the chief baker: 11and we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he; we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream. 12And 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. 13And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was; me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged.

14Then 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. 15And 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.

16And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.


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.
17 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, In my dream, behold, I stood upon the bank of the river:

18 and, behold, there came up out of the river seven kine, fatfleshed and well favoured; and they fed in a meadow; 19 and, behold, seven other kine came up after them, poor and very ill favoured and leaflessfleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness: 20 and the lean and the ill favoured kine did eat up the first seven fat kine: 21 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. 22 And I saw in my dream, and, behold, seven ears came up in one stalk, full and good: 23 and, behold, seven ears, withered, thin, and blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them: 24 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.

25 And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is: God hath shewed Pharaoh what he is about to do. 26 The seven good kine are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years: the dream is one. 27 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. 28 This is the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: What God is about to do he sheweth unto Pharaoh. 29 Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt: 30 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; 31 and the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following; for it shall be very grievous. 32 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.

33 Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. 34 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. 35 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. 36 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.

Joseph becomes ruler

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

39 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art. 40 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. 41 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt.

42 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; 43 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. 44 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. 45 And Pharaoh called Joseph’s name Zaphnath-paaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Poti-pharhah priest of On. And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt.

46 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. 47 And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls. 48 And he gathered.
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. 42Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering: for it was without number.

43And 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. 44And 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. 45And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.

46And the seven years of plenteousness, that was in the land of Egypt, were ended. 47And 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. 48And 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. 49And the famine was over all the face of the earth: And the seven years of plenteousness, that was in the land of Egypt, were ended.

50Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another? 51And 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. 52And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.

53And he said, From the land of Canaan to buy food. 54And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange: acted as a stranger. 55And he said to them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.

56And Joseph said, my lord, seest thou the cup which I cast out for thee? 57And the sons of Israel came to buy corn among those that came: for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

58And 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. 59And 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?

60And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food. 61And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him. 62And 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.

63And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come. 64We are all one man's sons; we are true men, thy servants are no spies.

65And he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land ye are come.

66And 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.

67And Joseph said, It is as ye say; God hath shown the cause of your sin: 68Ye were sore in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.

69Now Joseph could not conceal himself any longer, 70saying to his brethren, I am Joseph; do as I say, and say ye, Thy master is Joseph. 71And they did so, saying, as Joseph had told them, and saying, We are thy servants. 72And Joseph made them sit before him, as the eldest was on the right hand of him, and the youngest on the left hand of him, as they came out of Egypt.

73And Joseph said unto his brethren, Did my heart đem you away from your father? 74And Joseph said, Why have ye done this, to tell one another of your sore? 75Ye knew that there was nothing in my power to do unto you, when ye were sore.

76And Joseph said, Now shall ye also know that, as ye came one day's journey without money, and without loaves, and without water, I have met you. 77God sent me before you to prepare your way before your feet, unto the place where ye now are come. 78And Joseph provided victual for them against that famine which should be seven years: for he thought, There shall no famine be seen in all the earth, but in Egypt and in Canaan; that he might buy corn of you.
And Joseph said unto them, That is it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies: 
Hereby ye shall be proved: By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither. 
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 truths in you, or else by the life of Pharaoh surely ye are spies. 
And he put them all together into ward three days.

And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live: for I fear God; 
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: 
but bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so.

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.

And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefor, behold, also his blood is required. 
And they knew not that Joseph understood them; for he spake unto them by an interpreter. 
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.

Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man’s money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way: and thus did he unto them. 
And they laded their asses with the corn, and departed thence. 
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. 
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?

And they came unto Jacob their father unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that befell unto them; saying, 
The man, who is the lord of the land, spake roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country. 
And we said unto him, We are true men: we are no spies; 
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. 
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: 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 traffic in the land.

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. 
And Jacob their father said unto them, Mee 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.

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.

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

And the famine was sore in the land. 
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.

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. 
If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food: 
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.

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.

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.
And Israel said, Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother?

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?

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. 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: for except we had lingered, surely now we had returned this second time.

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; 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; perhaps it was an oversight.

Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man: and say, these be your servants' words; and, see, thy servants' money is returned in our sacks: we had not straw to put in our sacks, when we came the first time unto thee.

And Jacob sent the men his servants: and the cup of silver was found in the young man's sack.

Then Benjamin, Joseph's brother, said, I pray you, let my lord now speak, I pray thee, the king's peace. And the man sped, and bowed low.

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.

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.

And they came near to the steward of Joseph's house, and they communed with him at the door of the house, and said, O sir, we came indeed down at the first time to buy food:

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. And other money have we brought down in our hands to buy food: we cannot tell who put our money in our sacks.

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.

And the men brought the men into Joseph's house, and gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their asses provender.

And they brought their present unto Joseph, and bowed themselves to the earth.

And Joseph saw Benjamin his brother, and said, Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? And they answered, Thy servant our father is, and is in good health, he is yet alive.

And they answered, Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance.

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.

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. And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread.

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.

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.
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. 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. As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses. 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? Is not this in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? ye have done evil in so doing.

And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these same words. And they said unto him, Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing: 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? With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondmen.

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. Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack. And he searched, and began at the eldest, and left at the youngest: and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. Then they rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city.

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.

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.

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. My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother? 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. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more.

43:2 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. 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. 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.

44:32 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.

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.
And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, Go again, and buy us a little food. 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. And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons: and the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since: and if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

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, 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. 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.

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. And it came to pass, when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words that thou spakest unto us, saying, This is the place of God’s house. And he said, This is the place of God’s house. And then the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard.

Joseph sends for Jacob

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. And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard.

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. 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.

Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. 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. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. 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.

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; 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: 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.

And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you. And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye see; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither.

And he fell upon his brother Benjamin’s neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.

And the fame thereof was heard in Pharaoh’s house, saying, Joseph’s brethren are come: and it pleased Pharaoh well, and his servants. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren, This do ye; lade your beasts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan;

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  

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 good or 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 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  

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 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.

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. 19Now 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. 20Also regard not your stuff; for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours. 21And the children of Israel did so: and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way. 22To 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. 23And 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. 24So he sent his brethren away, and they departed: and he said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way: 25And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father, and told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt.
And Jacob’s heart fainted, for he believed them not. 27 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: 28And 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

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. 2And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob.

And he said, Here am I.

3And 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: 4I 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.

5And 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.

6And 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: 7his sons, and his sons’ sons with him, his daughters, and his sons’ daughters, and all his seed brought he with him into Egypt.

8And these are the names of the children of Israel, which came into Egypt, Jacob and his sons: Reuben, Jacob’s firstborn. 9And the sons of Reuben; Hanoch, and Phallu, and Hezron, and Carmi. 10And the sons of Simeon; Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanitish woman. 11And the sons of Levi; Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. 12And 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.

13And the sons of Issachar; Tola, and Phuvah, and Job, and Shimron. 14And the sons of Zebulun; Sered, and Elon, and Jahleel. 15These 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.

16And the sons of Gad; Ziphion, and Haggi, Shuni, and Ezbon, Eri, and Arodi, and Areli.

17And the sons of Asher; Jimnah, and Ishuah, and Isui, and Beriah, and Serah their sister: and the sons of Beriah; Heber, and Malchiel. 18These are the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter, and these she bare unto Jacob, even sixteen souls.

19The sons of Rachel Jacob’s wife; Joseph, and Benjamin. 20And 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. 21And the sons of Benjamin were Belah, and Becher, and Ashbel, Gera, and Naaman, Ehi, and Rosh, Muppim, and Huppim, and Ard. 22These are the sons of Rachel, which were born to Jacob: all the souls were fourteen.

46:6 seed: descendants.

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.
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.

46:23 And the sons of Dan; Hushim. 24 And the sons of Naphtali; Jaaziel, and Guni, and Jezer,
and Shillem. 25 These are the sons of Bilhah, which Laban gave unto Rachel his daughter,
and she bare these unto Jacob: all the souls were seven.

46:26 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; 27 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.

46:28 And he sent Judah before him unto Joseph, to direct his face unto Goshen; and they
came into the land of Goshen. 29 And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Is-
rael his father, to Goshen, and presented himself unto him; and he fell on his neck, and wept
on his neck a good while. 30 And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy
face, because thou art yet alive.

31 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: 32 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. 33 And it
shall come to pass, when Pharaoh shall call you, and shall say, What is your occupation?
34 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.

46:29 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,
and behold, they are in the land of Goshen. 2 And he took some of his brethren, even five
men, and presented them unto Pharaoh. 3 And Pharaoh made unto his brethren, What is your
occupation?

And they said unto Pharaoh, Thy servants are shepherds, both we, and also our fathers.
4 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.

5 And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee:
6 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.

7 And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh: and Jacob blessed
Pharaoh. 8 And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old art thou?

9 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. 10 And
Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh.

11 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. 12 And Jo-
seph nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father’s household, with bread, ac-
cording to their families.

13 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. 14 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.

46:30 to...46:34 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.
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.

And Joseph said, Give your cattle; and I will give you for your cattle, if money fail. 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.

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.

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. And as for the people, he removed them to cities from one end of the borders of Egypt even to the other end thereof. 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.

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. 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.

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. 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.

7. Jacob and Joseph die in Egypt

Jacob blesses Joseph

And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein, and grew; and multiplied exceedingly. And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years: so the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years. 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 the sight of my lord, let me know: I pray thee, wherefore didst thou deal so with me?

And Joseph said, Before I came to my lord, thou didst say, Bring thy father, and I will know thee. And thou hast caused thy father to come unto me again and again, and hast made him a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath: and I said, I will not go in unto thee into Egypt: and she died there in the land of Canaan, in the land of Egypt. And Joseph said, the time is come that my brother Ephraim, whom I did not find when thou camest, wisheth to go up with us into Egypt: wherefore didst thou do unto me?

And Joseph said, Let not my father go down into Egypt; lest peradventure he see the evil which is in the land, and die; and thou bring not my father down with thee. For there in the land of Egypt are all the stores of food; and if there shall be famine in the land, then will he be satisfied, and will not be troubled, and will not be injured for all the evil that is in the land.

Then Joseph said, Swear unto me. And he sware unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the bed.

And he said, Swear unto me. And he sware unto him. And Israel said, I pray thee, bury me in the land of Canaan, which I bought thee; that I may bury my father. And Joseph said, I will do as thou hast said. And he said, I pray thee, let me go up and bury my father: for he said, I will go up, and I will see my grave. Then Joseph spake unto the Egyptians, and to Pharaoh, saying, My father made me an oath, saying, I pray thee, place this cord in my mouth, and say, I pray thee, it be not in my mouth: and let not my father go down into Egypt.

And Joseph said, Swear unto me. And he sware unto him. And Joseph said, Put thy hand upon my eyes. And he did so. And Joseph spake, saying, Behold, I pray thee, I see my grave in the land of Canaan, in the land which they sold me, and I shall be gathered as yet unto my people. And he kissed Joseph, and wept upon him. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, Go up, and bury thy father: as he hath commanded thee.

And Israel said, I shall be gathered as yet unto my people; and thou shalt carry me up out of Egypt. And he said, I will do as thou hast said.

Jacob and Joseph die in Egypt

And he died, and they brought him out of Egypt, and they buried him in the land of Canaan in the field of Ephrath, which also is Bethel, which Abraham gave to his daughter Leah, the wife of Isaac. And Joseph called to his sons, and said, I am about to die: call unto me, and I will tell you what ye shall do for the land.

And Joseph said, When I am dead, God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land of which he sware unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them. And Joseph said unto his sons, I charge you by God, saying, God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones out of this land. And Joseph made an oath unto his sons, saying, Swear unto me, and I said, If ye will do so, then God will shew you mercy, and bring you again unto the land of Canaan.

And Joseph bowed himself, and died in Egypt. And Joseph was an hundred and ten years old. And the sons of Joseph, both the sons of Ephraim and the sons of Manasseh, were twenty and two souls. And the sons of Joseph, which were born of him in Egypt, were but two souls, and two souls the sons of Joseph were brought up. And Joseph spake unto his sons, saying, I die: but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land of which he sware unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.

And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones out of this land. And Joseph died in Ephrath, which is in the land of Canaan. And his sons carried him out of the land of Canaan, and brought him unto Egypt, unto the city of Zoan, that is, to Alexandria.
And Israel beheld Joseph's sons, and said, Who are these?
And Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place.
And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them. 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. And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see this day, before I die.

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.

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.

**Parallel Between Joseph and Jesus**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genesis 37–50</th>
<th>Joseph</th>
<th>Parallels</th>
<th>Jesus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>37:10</td>
<td>His father loved him dearly</td>
<td>Matthew 3:17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37:13, 14</td>
<td>Sent by father to brothers</td>
<td>Hebrews 2:11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37:16–18</td>
<td>Falsey accused</td>
<td>Matthew 26:59, 60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40:2, 3</td>
<td>Placed with two other prisoners, one who was saved and the other lost.</td>
<td>Luke 23:32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41:46</td>
<td>Both 30 years old at the beginning of public recognition</td>
<td>Luke 3:23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41:41</td>
<td>Exalted after suffering</td>
<td>Philippians 2:9–11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50:20</td>
<td>What men did to hurt them God turned to good</td>
<td>1 Corinthians 2:7, 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

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.

And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again
unto the land of your fathers. 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.

Jacob's prophecies

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.

Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your
father.

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 wast exalted to the fear of thy father's bed; then
defiledst thou it: he went up to my coach.

Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations.

O my soul, come not thou into their assembly: 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.

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.

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
couchèd 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.

Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his gar-
mants in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes:

His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.

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.

Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens:

And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoul-
der to bear, and became a servant unto tribute.

Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel.

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.

I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.

Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last.
These verses express God’s repeated rescues of Joseph when his enemies attacked him. So often we struggle with injury or persecution is directed at you? Such spiritual battles require teamwork between courageous, faithful people and a mighty God.

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Notable Descendants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reuben</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simeon</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levi</td>
<td>Aaron, Moses, Eli, John the Baptist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judah</td>
<td>David, Jesus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan</td>
<td>Samson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naphtali</td>
<td>Barak, Elijah (?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gad</td>
<td>Jephthah (?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asher</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issachar</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zebulun</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph</td>
<td>Joshua, Deborah, Gideon, Samuel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin</td>
<td>Saul, Esther, Paul</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 three score and ten days.

4 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, 5 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.

6 And Pharaoh said, Go up, and bury thy father, according as he made thee swear.

7 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, 8 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. 9 And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen: and it was a very great company.

10 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. 11 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.

12 And his sons did unto him according as he commanded them: 13 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. 14 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.

Joseph treats his brothers kindly

22 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. 23 And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, 24 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.

25 And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants.

26 And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? 27 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. 28 Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.

Joseph dies

22 And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he, and his father's house: and Joseph lived an hundred and ten years. 23 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.

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. 25 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. 26 So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

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.

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.

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.

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.

MEGATHEMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME</th>
<th>EXPLANATION</th>
<th>IMPORTANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Praise</td>
<td>Psalms are songs of praise to God as our Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer. Praise is recognizing, appreciating, and expressing God’s greatness.</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God’s Power</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forgiveness</td>
<td>Many psalms are intense prayers asking God for forgiveness. God forgives us when we confess our sin and turn from it.</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thankfulness</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>People can be unfair and friends may desert us. But we can trust God. Knowing God intimately drives away doubt, fear, and loneliness.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

1:1 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 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.
2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.
3 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.
4 The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.
5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.
6 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)

1 Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?
2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying,
3 Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.
4 He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.
5 Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.
6 Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.
7 I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.
8 Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.
9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.
10 Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.


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 “whosoever 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 than 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; Revelation 2:26, 27; 12:5; 19:15).
Serf the LoRD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

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

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.

When you want . . . Read . . .

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 (3:8). 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.
Psalm 4

1. 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.

2. 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

To the Chief Musician upon Nehiloth, A Psalm of David

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the Lord will hear when I call unto him.

4. Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.

5. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord.

6. There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? the Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.

7. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.

8. I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, O 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

To the Chief Musician upon Neginoth, A Psalm of David

1. Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation.

2. Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray.

3. My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.

4. For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee.

5. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity.

6. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.

Theme: The secret of a close relationship with God is to pray to him earnestly in the morning. 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?

3:7 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.

4:1 The poem may have been written as David was asking his enemies to reconsider their support of Absalom. Others see this poem 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.

4:3 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—innward joy that comes from knowing and trusting God and happiness that comes as a result of pleasant circumstances. Innward joy is steady as long as we trust in God; happiness is unpredictable. Innward joy defeats discouragement; happiness covers it up. Innward 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?
5:4 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.

6:18 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.
My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O Lord, how long?  
Return, O Lord, deliver my soul; oh save me for thy mercies’ sake.

For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?  
I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears.

Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies.

Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping.

The Lord hath heard my supplication; the Lord will receive my prayer.

Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed: let them return and be ashamed suddenly.

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

Shiggaion of David, which he sang unto the Lord, concerning the words of Cush the Benjaminite

1 O Lord my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me:

2 Letst he tear my soul like a lion, rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver.

3 O Lord my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands;

4 If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me; (yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy:)

5 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.

6 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.

7 So shall the congregation of the people compass thee about: for their sakes therefore return thou on high.

8 The Lord shall judge the people: judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me.

9 Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just: for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins.

10 My defence is of God, which saveth the upright in heart.

11 God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day.

12 If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready.

13 He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors.

14 Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood.

6:3 pour out: expressed as “weeping” in the original Hebrew. 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
15 He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made.  
16 His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate.  
17 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**

1 O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.  
2 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.  
3 When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;  
4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?  
5 For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.  
6 Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet;  
7 All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;  
8 The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.  
9 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**

1 I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will shew forth all thy marvellous works.  
2 I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High.  
3 By what shall I answer thee, especially about mulberries? I will not be silent: before whom shall I lie down?  
4 What profit is it that I should set up my table before me? what solace shall I take in my meat?  
5 Let my mouth speak of thy righteousness, and of the remembrance of thine excellency all the day long.  
6 Let me praise thee, for I am extremely wretched.  
7 Be not long displeased with me: O Lord, cause me to keep thy way.  
8 Draw near to me, and I will give thee knowledge of dark things; what I have not known shall I understand.  
9 I will understand what judgment thou hast appointed: and I will know what is good.  
10 I will praise the Lord according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the Lord most high.  
11 The Lord is my righteousness.  
12 For I wait for my God, and he will cause my foot not to slip.  
13 He will make me to see my desire upon mine enemies: and my eyes shall see my desire upon them.  
14 For because of thee, O Lord, I will go into the house of God, I will bow down toward thy holy temple, worship the beauty of thine house, the strength of thine holy temple.  
15 My cry is unto thee, Lord: because of the excellency of thine integrity.  
16 Mine enemies turn their back: and I break their necks. They fall down before me.  
17 I will praise thee again, O Lord: my mouth shall speak of thy righteousness all the day long.
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 L ORD 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.

The L ORD 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, L ORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.  
11 Sing praises to the L ORD, which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people his doings.  
12 When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them: he forgettest not the cry of the humble.  
13 Have mercy upon me, O L ORD; 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.

The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made: in the net which they hid is their own foot taken.  
16 The L ORD 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 always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall be strengthened for ever.  
19 Arise, O L ORD; let not man prevail: let the heathen be judged in thy sight.  
20 Put them in fear, O L ORD; that the nations may know themselves to be but men. Selah.

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.

3 Why standest thou afar off, O L ORD? 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.

For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the L ORD abhorreth.


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 we will 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.
The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.

His ways are always grievous; thy judgments are far above out of his sight: as for all his enemies, he puffeth at them.

He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for I shall never be in adversity.

His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue is mischief and vanity.

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.

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.

He croucheth, and humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones.

He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it.

Arose, O Lord; O God, lift up thine hand: forget not the humble.

Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God? he hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it.

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.

Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil man: seek out his wickedness till thou find none.

The Lord is King for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of his land.

LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear:

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

1 In the Lorn put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?

2 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.

3 If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?

4 The Lorn is in his holy temple, the Lorn’s throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.

5 The wicked understand not, but the righteous considereth his way.

6 The fear of the Lorn is clean, enduring for ever: the man that keepeth his con-

8 The Lorn will not cast off his people: his朝 will not be removed for ever.

9 How long shall the wicked, O Lord, how long shall the wicked triumph?

10 The wicked lieth in wait to kill the poor: even to slay such as are at ease in their posses-

11 The Lord knoweth the days of the wicked, and is ready to destroy the place of the wicked: he cutteth them off in their iniquity.

12 The Lord reserveth not his mercy: as a cloud covereth the face of the earth, so reserveth he his anger.

13 The Lord is good, merciful, and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in kindness.

14 The Lord is good and doth favors unto his creatures: he saveth the soul of his servants; he doth waken them up after their sleep.

15 The Lord answered me, and I was set up as one that had good understanding.

16 Thou wilt maintain man in prosperity, if thou wilt only look to him.

17 Thou earnest up mine understanding like the sea, and leadest me in thy right paths.

18 My soul followeth after thine words: thy judgments make me wiser than mine enemies.

19 I understand more than the unwise: I give my heart to know wisdom.

20 I direct my heart like a scribe: I set my heart to know wisdom.

21 I go about in the feast of thine ordinances, I consider the work of thine fingers, I am carefully meditating on the work of thine hands.

22 I will be as the child that is weaned from his mother: I will be as the deaf men who receive not reproof.

23 For thy judgments are my delights; more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold.

24 My lips shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy glory all the day long.

25 For I have loved thy judgments more than earthly wealth.

26 I will praise thee, O Lord, with all my heart: I will shew forth all thy marvellous works.

27 I will glory in thy name: for it is good; thy mercy and truth shall durable.

28 My soul beareth witness: but let thine enemies be put to shame, and let the enemies of thine heart rejoice not over me.

29 I shall find no iniquity in thy mouth: therefore I shall keep thy commandments.

30 I will keep thy judgments and thy judgments shall be my delight.

31 My soul shall be subject to thy word: I put my trust in thy statutes.

32 Let my heart be without care: for thy judgments make me whole.

33 Let thine unapproachable presence be over me; and make me akesse of thy statutes.

34 I am a companion for them that fear thee, and hearken unto thy commandments.

35 Let my heart be as a loving heart: that I may be able to keep thy statutes.

36 I have been like a lamp that burneth all night long: I am not shut up; I spread my hands wide.

37 I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast exal-Sended me.

38 O Lord, I am desirous of thy salutations; I will consider thy statutes.

39 I will go into the temple of God: I will declare all thy words unto the king, and I will be a great rejoicing.
Ps 53:6; 85:1-2
Job 42:10
14:7
Ps 9:9; 40:17
14:6
Ps 9:9:40:17
14:7
Job 42:10
Ps 53:8: 85:1-2

4. Least mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; and those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved.
5. But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.
6. 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

Ps 10:4:53:1
Rom 3:10-12
Ps 33:13-15; 102:19
Ps 58:3; 143:2
Isa 64:7
Ps 9:9; 40:17
Job 42:10
Ps 53:8; 85:1-2

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).

14:4 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.
PSALM 15

Theme: Guidelines for living a blameless life
Author: David

15 A Psalm of David

1 Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?
2 He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.
3 He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.
4 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.
5 He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.

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

1 Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust.
2 O my soul, thou hast said unto the LORD, Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to thee;
3 But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.
4 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.
5 The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot.
6 The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places: yea, I have a goodly heritage.
7 I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons.
8 I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

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).

15:6 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.

15:7 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.”

16:3 The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places: yea, I have a goodly heritage.

16:4 The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot.

16:5 Although 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).
Ps 73:3-7
Ps 22:20
17:13
Pss 7:2; 10:9
17:12
Pss 37:14; 88:17
17:11
Ps 36:7-8

Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.

For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

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

A prayer of David

1 Hear the right, O L ORD, attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips.

2 Let my sentence come forth from thy presence; let thine eyes behold the things that are equal.

3 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.

4 Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.

5 Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.

6 I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me, O God: incline thine ear unto me, and hear my speech.

7 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.

8 Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings,

9 From the wicked that oppress me, from my deadly enemies, who compass me about.

10 They are inclosed in their own fat: with their mouth they speak proudly.

11 They have now compassed us in our steps: they have set their eyes bowing down to the earth;

12 Like as a lion that is greedy of his prey, and as it were a young lion lurking in secret places.

13 Arise, O L ORD, disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword:

14 From men which are thy hand, O L ORD, 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.


16:9 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.
15 As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

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,

1 I will love thee, O Lord, my strength.

2 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.

3 I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.

4 The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid.

5 The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me.

6 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.

7 Then the earth shook and trembled: the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth.

8 There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it.

9 He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet.

10 And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind.

11 He made darkness his secret place: his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies.

12 At the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed, hail stones and coals of fire.

13 The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire.

14 Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them.

15 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.

16 He sent from above, he drew me out of many waters.

17 He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me.

18 They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the Lord was my stay.

19 He brought me forth also into a large place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me.
with our challenges, however. Instead he stands beside us, teaches battles to fight, we would not grow. He does not leave us alone gave us no rough roads to walk, no mountains to climb, and no he promises to give us strength to meet those challenges. If he us, and strengthens us to face them.

18:32–34 God doesn’t promise to eliminate challenges; instead, he gifts us with a 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 will not eliminate challenges, but he will give us the strength to face them. 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.

18:35–36 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). This is why he repeatedly thanked God and gave him the credit for his successes. He knew that it was God who had given him the wins, and he didn’t want to take the glory for himself.

18:37–39 David was a merciful man. He spared the lives of Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 9). In asking God to destroy his enemies, David was simply asking him to give the wicked the punishment they deserved. David was a shrewd warrior who, with all his armies and weapons, knew that only God could ultimately protect and save him. He fully realized that the purpose of his position was to bless God’s people (1 Chronicles 14:2).
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.

Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Lorp, among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name.

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

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David

1 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork.
2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.
3 There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.
4 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,
5 Which is as a bridgework coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.
6 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.
7 The law of the Lorp is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lorp is sure, making wise the simple.
8 The statutes of the Lorp are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lorp is pure, enlightening the eyes.
9 The fear of the Lorp is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lorp are true and righteous altogether.
10 More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.
11 Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.
12 Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.
13 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.
14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lorp, my strength, and my redeemer.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.
Psalm 21

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

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

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.

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
Psalm 22

11 For they intended evil against thee: they imagined a mischievous device, which they are not able to perform.
12 Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back, when thou shalt make ready thine arrows upon thy strings against the face of them.
13 Be thou exalted, Lord, in thine own strength: so will we sing and praise thy power.

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

1 My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?
2 O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.
3 But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.
4 Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.
5 They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.
6 But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.
7 All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head.
8 He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.
9 But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother’s breasts.
10 I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother’s belly.
11 Be not far from me: for trouble is near; for there is none to help.
12 Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.
13 They gapied upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.
14 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.
15 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.
16 For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.
17 I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.
18 They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.
19 But be not thou far from me, O my strength, haste thee to help me.
20 Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog.

22:21 the Messiah to come, gained victory. 22:22 part: divide. vesture: clothing.
22:23 darling: precious life.

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).
Psalm 22

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

Ps 34:4, 118:5, 120:1

Heb 2:12

Ps 33:8; 86:12; 135:19-20

Ps 27:9; 31:22

Heb 5:7

Ps 35:18; 40:9-10

Ps 46:16, 69:32; 107:9

Ps 47:6-8

Ps 102:18, 28

22:22

David would praise God among the people because his private deliverance deserved a public testimony. God may wonderously 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.

22:23, 30

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.

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.

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<td>40:6-8</td>
<td>He will come to do God’s will</td>
<td>Hebrews 10:5–7</td>
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<td>41:9</td>
<td>One close to him will betray him</td>
<td>Luke 22:48</td>
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<tr>
<td>45:6, 7</td>
<td>His Kingdom will last forever</td>
<td>Hebrews 1:8, 9</td>
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<td>68:18</td>
<td>He will ascend into heaven</td>
<td>Ephesians 4:8–10</td>
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<td>69:9</td>
<td>He will be zealous for God</td>
<td>John 2:17</td>
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<td>69:21</td>
<td>He will be offered gall and vinegar for his thirst on the cross</td>
<td>Matthew 27:48</td>
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<td>89:3, 4, 35, 36</td>
<td>He will be a descendant of David</td>
<td>Luke 1:31–33</td>
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<td>96:13</td>
<td>He will return to judge the world</td>
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<td>110:1</td>
<td>He is David’s son and David’s Lord</td>
<td>Matthew 22:44</td>
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<td>110:4</td>
<td>He is the eternal Priest-King</td>
<td>Hebrews 6:20</td>
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<td>118:22</td>
<td>He is rejected by many but accepted by God</td>
<td>1 Peter 2:7, 8</td>
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22:23

Ps 33:8, 86:12; 135:19-20

Ps 27:9; 31:22

Heb 5:7

Ps 35:18; 40:9-10

Ps 46:16, 69:32; 107:9

Ps 47:6-8

Ps 102:18, 28

22:30

A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.

22:30

Ps 102:18, 28
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

1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.
3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.
4 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.
5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
6 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

1 The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.
2 For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.
3 Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?
4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.
5 He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.
6 This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah.

23:4 unto vanity: to an idol.
Psalm 25

25:1 Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.
25:2 O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.
25:3 Remember the transgressions of my youth, and my sins; according to thy mercy teach me thy righteousness.
25:4 Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.
25:5 For great is thy mercy toward me; and thou hast delivered my soul out of the deceitful man.
25:6 Do good to me, O Lord; for my soul waiteth on thee: give me the morning light.
25:7 Let me not be ashamed, O Lord: let not mine enemies triumph over me.
25:8 Forsake not the work of thine hands, nor from the burden of thine fenced house.
25:9 Remember, O Lord, thy tenderness and thy lovingkindness: for they have been ever old.
25:10 Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy teach me thy righteousness.

Theme: A prayer for defense, guidance, and pardon. As we trust in God, he grants these same requests for us.

Author: David
10 All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.
11 For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.
12 What man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.
13 His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth.
14 The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.
15 Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord; for he shall pluck my feet out of the net.
16 Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted.
17 The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my distresses.
18 Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins.
19 Consider mine enemies; for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred.
20 O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee.
21 Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee.
22 Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.

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

1 Judge me, O Lord; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the Lord; therefore I shall not slide.
2 Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.
3 For thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth.
4 I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers.
5 I have hated the congregation of evildoers; and will not sit with the wicked.
6 I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O Lord.
7 I will publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works.
8 Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.
9 Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men:
10 In whose hands is mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes.
11 But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity; redeem me, and be merciful unto me.
12 My foot standeth in an even place: in the congregations will I bless the Lord.

26:12 '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 then can he teach us how to choose his way.'

26:14 '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.'

26:16, 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.'

26:21 '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 God in private? Instead, we ought to complain privately and praise God publicly.
27 A Psalm of David

1 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?

2 When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.

3 Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.

4 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.

5 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.

6 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.

7 Hear, O Lord, when I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me.

8 When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.

9 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.

10 When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.

11 Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.

12 Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies: for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.

13 I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

14 Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.

Theme: God offers help for today and hope for the future. Unwavering confidence in God is our antidote for fear and loneliness.

Author: David

Ps 27:1-11
Ps 118:6, 14
Ps 3:6-7; 14:4
Ps 23:6; 26:8
Ps 17:8; 31:20
Ps 13:6; 107:22
Ps 113:3
Ps 105:4
Ps 6:1; 40:17; 94:14
Ps 40:11; 49:15
Ps 5:8; 25:4; 86:11
Ps 35:11
Ps 116:9; 142:5
Ps 13:6; 107:22
Ps 31:24; 37:34

Ps 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.”

Ps 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?

Ps 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.

Ps 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 children 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.

Ps 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.

Ps 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

1 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.
2 Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle.
3 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.
4 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.
5 Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up.
6 Blessed be the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications.
7 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.
8 Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.

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

1 Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength.
2 Give unto the Lord, O ye his saints, worship him in the beauty of holiness.
3 The voice of the Lord is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the Lord is upon many waters.
4 The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty.
5 The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars; yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.
6 He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.
7 The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire.
8 The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness; the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.
9 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.
10 The Lord sitteth upon the flood; yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever.
11 The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace.

28:3-5 It’s easy to pretend friendship. Wicked people often put on a show of kindness or friendliness 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.

28:5-6 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.

29:6-11 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.
I will extol thee, O Lord; for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.  

2 O Lord my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.  

3 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.  

4 Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.  

5 For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.  

6 And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.  

7 Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.  

8 I cried to thee, O Lord; and unto the Lord I made supplication.  

9 What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth?  

10 Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me: Lord, be thou my helper.  

11 Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness;  

12 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: A celebration of God’s deliverance. Earthly security is uncertain, but God is always faithful.

Author: David

A Psalm and Song at the dedication of the house of David

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.

30:4 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. It 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-relying, 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.

Theme: In times of stress, depending upon God requires complete commitment.

Author: David, although some say Jeremiah

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David

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.
7 I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities;
8 And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy; thou hast set my feet in a large room.
9 Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble: mine eye is consumed with grief, yea, my soul and my belly.
10 For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed.
11 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.
12 I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel.
13 My times are in thy hand: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.
14 Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: save me for thy mercies’ sake.
15 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.
16 Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.
17 Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!
18 Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the strife of tongues.
19 Blessed be the Lord: for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city.
20 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.
21 For I trusted in thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my God.
22 Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.
23 O love the Lord, all ye his saints: for he hath preserved the faithful, and plentifully rewarded the proud doer.
24 For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.
25 Thou hast heard my voice when I called: thou wast merciful unto me when I was in trouble: thou shalt forgiveth the transgression of my sin.
26 Blessed is he whose sin is covered,
27 Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.
28 When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.
29 For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.

31:9 hasty. 31:10 heart. 31:11 rendered. 31:12 servant. 31:13mercy. 31:14 heart. 31:15 time.


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

1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.
2 Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.
3 When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.
4 For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.

32:1 transgression: any sin committed by a person against God or another person.

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 32:10
1 Jn 1:9
Ps 69:13
Isa 43:2
Exod 15:1
Pss 31:20; 40:3; 121:7
Ps 25:6; 33:18-19
Ps 16:4
Prov 16:20
Rom 2:9-10

Pss 32:11; 147:1
Ps 92:3
Pss 96:1; 98:1
Rev 5:9
Ps 19:8
Pss 117; 119:64
Gen 1:6-7
Ps 148:5
Heb 11:3
Exod 15:8
Pss 67:7; 96:9

5 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.
6 Thou shalt teach me the way of thy command; so shall I keep it to the end. 7 Turn thou my heart to thy steadfast love, and let me not be ashamed. 8 Let the iniquity of my sins be blotted out, and let my transgressions be expiated. 9 Let me discern my life with my eyes; that I may not be iniquity for ever. 10 Make me to understand the way of thy precepts; so shall I meditate on thy wondrous works. 11 My soul melteth away within me; my heart is fearfully troubled within me. 12 I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands. 13 I spread out my hands toward thee; for what can man do in his own sight? 14 My heart turneth continually toward thy statutes; and I have discerned thy righteous judgments. 15 I find more delight in thy law than in much spicery. 16 I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of the upright in heart. 17 Their word standeth fast forever: their offspring shall be blessed forever. 18 I hope in thy word; let me not be put to shame, mine enemy; for I put my trust in thy word. 19 Consider mine oaths of truth, O LORd, thy servant; and grant me thy law. 20 For I am a God of great mercy, and I have no iniquity. 21 Also I have kept thy precepts一句一句的, and have not travailed my back. 22 Consider my affliction, and my sorrow; and forgive all my sins.

32:6
Ps 69:13
Isa 43:2
Exod 15:1
Pss 31:20; 40:3; 121:7
Ps 25:6; 33:18-19
Ps 16:4
Prov 16:20
Rom 2:9-10

32:7
Ps 96:1; 98:1
Rev 5:9
Ps 19:8
Pss 117; 119:64
Gen 1:6-7
Ps 148:5
Heb 11:3
Exod 15:8
Pss 67:7; 96:9

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 Rejoice in the LORd, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright.
2 Praise the LORd with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings.
3 Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise.
4 For the word of the LORd is right; and all his works are done in truth.
5 He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORd.
6 By the word of the LORd were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.
7 He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses.
8 Let all the earth fear the LORd: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.
9 O praise the LORd for he is good; for his mercy endureth forever.
10 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.
10 Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORd, mercy shall compass him about.
11 Be glad in the LORd, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.

Consequences: If we do not repent, we will end up putting ourselves in harm’s way by becoming 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.

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.

32:2, 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).

33:2-9 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.
The horse refers to military strength. Because God Let him counsel you.
whom you can trust, remember that God is completely consistent. never changes (James 1:17). When you wonder if there is anyone that good and perfect gifts come to us from the Creator who trustworthy—his intentions never change. The Bible promises tendencies you see in others, or even in yourself? God is completely trustworthy. 
To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.
Our soul waiteth for the Lord: he is our help and our shield.
For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name.
Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we hope in thee.

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)

A Psalm of David, when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed.

I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.
My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.
O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.
I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.
They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.
This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.
The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.
O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.
O fear the Lord, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him.

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 oversees 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.
34:1f 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
The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.

Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good?

Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.

Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.

The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.

The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.

The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.

He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.

Draw out also the spear, and stop their way, and take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for mine help.

Let their way be dark and slippery: and let the angel of the Lord chase them.

Let them be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the Lord chase them.

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.

Let them be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the Lord chase them.

Let them be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the Lord pursue them.

Theme: A prayer to God for help against those who try to inflict injury for no reason.

Author: David, probably written when he was being hunted by Saul (1 Samuel 24)

34:10-19 The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing. 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.

35:1-10 Plead my cause, O Lord, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me. 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.

34:11-12 Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for mine help. 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.

34:13-18 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.

34:19-22 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.

35:1-10 The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.
7 For without cause have they hid for me their net in a pit, which without cause they have digged for my soul.
8 Let destruction come upon him at unawares; and let his net that he hath hid catch himself: into that very destruction let him fall.
9 And my soul shall be joyful in the Lord: it shall rejoice in his salvation.
10 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?
11 False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not.
12 They rewarded me evil for good to the spoiling of my soul.
13 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.
14 I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother.
15 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:
16 With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth.
17 Lord, how long wilt thou look on? rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions.
18 I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people.
19 Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me: let them not say in their hearts, Ah, so would we have it: let them not say, We have swallowed him up.
20 For they speak not peace: but they devise deceitful matters against them that are quiet in the land.
21 Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me, and said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen it.
22 This thou hast seen, O Lord: keep not silence: O Lord, be not far from me.
23 Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment, even unto my cause, my God and my Lord.
24 Judge me, O Lord my God, according to thy righteousness; and let them not rejoice over me.
25 Let them not say in their hearts, Ah, so would we have it: let them not say, We have swallowed him up.
26 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.
27 Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause: yea, let them say, Let destruction come upon him at unawares; and let his net that he hath hid catch himself: into that very destruction let him fall.
28 For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful.
29 The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes.
30 For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful.
31 The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise, and to do good.

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

1 The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes.
2 For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful.
3 The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise, and to do good.

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.
Commit yourself 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.

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.

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).
The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth.

The Lord shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming.

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.

Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken.

A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.

For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the Lord upholdeth the righteous.

The Lord knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever.

They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.

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.

Wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it.

The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way.

Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.

I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.

He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed.

Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore.

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.

The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.

The mouth of the righteous spaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment.

The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.

The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him.

The L ORD will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged.

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.

I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree.

Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.

Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.

But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off.

But the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord: he is their strength in the time of trouble.

And the Lord shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him.

You can tell a lot about a person's character by the way he or she handles money. The good person looks to the welfare of others.

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.

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.
38

**A Psalm of David, to bring to remembrance**

1 O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.

2 For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore.

3 There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin.  
4 For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.  
5 My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness.  
6 I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long.  
7 For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease: and there is no soundness in my flesh.  
8 I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.  
9 Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee.  
10 My heart panteth, my strength faileth me: as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me.  
11 My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off.  
12 They also that seek after my life lay snares for me, and they that seek my hurt speak mischiefous things, and imagine deceits all the day long.  
13 But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth.  
14 Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs.  
15 For in thee, O Lord, do I hope: thou wilt hear, O Lord my God.  
16 For I said, Hear me, lest otherwise they should rejoice over me: when my foot slippeth, they magnify themselves against me.  
17 For I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me.  
18 For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.  
19 But mine enemies are lively, and they are strong: and they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied.  
20 They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries; because I follow the thing that is good.  
21 Forsake me not, O Lord: O my God, be not far from me.  
22 Make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation.

**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

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**38:1f** This is called a penitential psalm because David expressed sorrow for his sin (38:18). He stated that his sin led to health problems (38:1–5) 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!
PSALM 39

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

1 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.

2 I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good; and my sorrow was stirred.

3 My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue.

4 Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am.

5 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.

6 Surely every man walketh in a vain shew: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.

7 And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee.

8 Deliver me from all my transgressions: make me not the reproach of the foolish.

9 I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it.

10 Remove thy stroke away from me: I am consumed by the blow of thine hand.

11 When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth: surely every man is vanity.

12 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.

13 O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.

Theme: Doing God’s will sometimes means waiting patiently. While we wait, we can love and serve others, and tell others about him.

Author: David

40

To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David

1 I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.

2 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.

3 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.

4 Blessed is that man that maketh the Lord his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.

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.

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.
Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to usward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.

Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.

Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me,

I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.

I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest.

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.

Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O Lord: let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me.

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.

Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me: O Lord, make haste to help me.

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.

Let them be desolate for a reward of their shame that say unto me, Aha, aha.

Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: let such as love thy salvation say continually, The Lord be magnified.

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

1 Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.

2 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.

3 The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.

4 I said, Lord, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee.

5 Mine enemies speak evil of me, When shall he die, and his name perish?

6 And if he come to see me, he speaketh vanity: his heart gathereth iniquity to itself; when he goeth abroad, he telleth it.

7 All that hate me whisper together against me: against me do they devise my hurt.

8 The Lord will not cast off the poor for love of their kindness; neither will he take wv with the rich for their oppressions.

9 He loveth them that be of a pure heart; and he Coroneth the heart of the simple: the Lord is a sure help to the sees.

10 He will keep the feet of his saints: from the snares of the wicked will he deliver him.

11 He will provide for the poor in time of trouble; but the riches of the snares are for them that are asleep.

12 The Lord will redeem his servants; the great and the small shall sing for joy before God in the temple of the Lord.


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.

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.

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.

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.

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.
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8 An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him: and now that he lieth he shall rise up no more.
9 Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.
10 But thou, O Lord, be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them.
11 By this I know that thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.
12 And as for me, thou upholseth me in mine integrity, and setteth me before thy face for ever.
13 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

1 As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.
2 My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?
3 My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?
4 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.
5 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.
6 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.
7 Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.
8 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.
9 I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?
10 As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?


42:9 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 26:14–18, 20–25).

42:13 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.

42:1f 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 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.
43:1  judge me, o god, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation: o deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.
43:2  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  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  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.
43:5  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.

44:1ff  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 serving 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.

the sons of korah (temple assistants).

44:1  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  how thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand, and plantest them; how thou didst afflict the people, and cast them out.
44:3  how thou didst save us from our enemies, and hast put them to shame that hated us.
44:4  thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat; and hast scattered us among the heathen.
44:5  health: help. 44:6 heathen: nations. 44:10 spoil for themselves: have plundered us. 44:11 appointed for meat intended for slaughter.

44:1  to the chief musician for the sons of korah, maschil
12 Thou sellest thy people for nought, and dost not increase thy wealth by their price.
13 Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and a derision to them that are round about us.
14 Thou makest us a byword among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people.
15 My confusion is continually before me, and the shame of my face hath covered me,
16 For the voice of him that reproacheth and blasphemeth; by reason of the enemy and avenger.
17 All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant.
18 Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way;
19 Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.
20 If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god;
21 Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.
22 Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long: we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.
23 Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord? arise, cast as not off for ever.
24 Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and forgettest our affliction and our oppression?
25 For our soul is bowed down to the dust: our belly cleaveth unto the earth.
26 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

1 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.
2 Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.
3 Thou art the most fair of men: grace is poured into thy lips:
4 For our soul is bowed down to the dust: our belly cleaveth unto the earth.
5 For the voice of him that reproacheth and blasphemeth; by reason of the enemy and avenger.
6 Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.
7 Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.
8 Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.
9 Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.
10 All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby thy beauty is comely.
11 King's daughters were among thy honourable women: upon thy right hand didst thou make thy way glad.

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.

45:11f 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 sandal-wood, 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.
46:10—46

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).

10 Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house;
11 So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him.
12 And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour.
13 The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold.
14 She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee.
15 With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace.
16 Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.
17 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)

Psalm 126 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Bringing in the Sheaves
Psalm 104 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . O Worship the King, All Glorious Above
Psalm 103 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Praise to the Lord, the Almighty
Psalm 90 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . O God, Our Help in Ages Past
Psalm 87 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken
Psalm 61 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Hiding in Thee (O safe to the Rock that is higher than I . . .)
Psalm 46 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . A Mighty Fortress Is Our God
Psalm 23 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . The King of Love My Shepherd Is
Psalm 66:6, 8 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . and that right early: at the break of day. 46:6 heathen: nations.
46:9 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.

47:1 To the chief Musician, A Psalm for the sons of Korah

1 O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph.

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.

47:2 For the Lord most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth.

48:4 1 Chr 16:25; Pss 87:3; 96:4; 145:3; Zech 8:3

47:3 He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet.

46:2 Deut 7:21

48:5 Exod 15:15

47:4 He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved. Selah.

47:5 Pss 48:10; Ps 100:3; Isa 2:11, 17

48:6 Ps 88:4

47:6 God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.

47:7 Pss 48:8, 18, 25, 33; 98:6

48:7 Ps 48:2

47:8 Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises.

48:8 Ps 97:8

47:9 God is known in her palaces for a refuge.

48:9 Pss 72:11; 89:18; 97:5; Isa 49:7, 23; Rom 4:11-12

47:10 We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple.

48:10 1 Chr 16:31

47:11 According to thy name, O God, so will we do. Selah.

48:11 Ps 97:8

47:12 Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness.

47:2 terrible: awesome.

47:13 We have heard, so have we seen in the city of our Lord: our God. Selah.

47:3 heathen: nations.

47:14 God will establish it for ever. Selah.

47:4 for situation: in elevation.

47:15 For, lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together.

47:6 in sunder: in two.

47:16 They saw it, and so they marvelled; they were troubled, and hasted away.

47:7 war: labor.

47:17 Fear took hold upon them there, and pain, as of a woman in travail.

47:8 Ps 46:7

47:18 Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind.

47:9 Pss 72:11; 89:18; 97:5

47:20 As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord our God.

47:10 Ps 97:11

47:21 We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple.

47:22 According to thy name, O God, so will we do. Selah.

47:23 God will establish it for ever. Selah.

47:24 For, lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together.

48:11 Ps 97:11

48:12 They saw it, and so they marvelled; they were troubled, and hasted away.

47:13 Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness.

48:13 Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

48:14 The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

47:15 The people of the God of Abraham: even the people of the God of Abraham: for the shields of the earth belong unto God: he is greatly exalted.

48:15 A Song and Psalm for the sons of Korah

1 Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness.

48:16 Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is the mountain of his holiness.

48:17 And he will judge all nations and live with all believers (Revelation 21).

48:18 For, lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together.

48:19 According to thy name, O God, so will we do. Selah.

48:20 God will establish it for ever. Selah.

48:21 We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple.

48:22 According to thy name, O God, so will we do. Selah.
48:10
Ps 78:5–7
48:11
Ps 33:8; 78:1
48:12
Ps 37:30; 119:130
48:13
Num 12:8
2 Kgs 5:15
Ps 78:2
48:14
Ps 23:4; 27:1
48:15
Ps 52:7
Matt 10:24–25
48:16
Job 36:18
48:17
Matt 16:26
48:18
Ps 22:29; 89:48
48:19
Ps 19:6
Luke 12:20–21
48:20
Deut 3:14
Ps 10:6
48:21
Jer 17:11
48:22
Ps 9:17
Dan 7:18
Mal 4:3
1 Cor 6:2
Rev 2:26
48:23
Ps 16:10–11
48:24
Ps 37:7
48:25
Ps 17:14
1 Tim 6:7
12 Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof.
13 Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following.
14 For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.

Theme: Trusting in worldly possessions is futile. You cannot take possessions with you when you die, and they cannot buy forgiveness from sin.

Author: The sons of Korah (Temple assistants)

49
To the chief Musician, A Psalm for the sons of Korah

1 Hear this, all ye people; give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world:
2 Both low and high, rich and poor, together.
3 My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.
4 I will incline mine ear to a parable: I will open my dark saying upon the harp.
5 Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?
6 They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches;
7 None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him:
8 (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever:)
9 That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption.
10 For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others.
11 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.
12 Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish.
13 This their way is their folly; yet their posterity approve their sayings. Selah.
14 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 following.
15 But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me. Selah.
16 Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased;
17 For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him.


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.

49:11 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.
18 Though while he lived he blessed his soul; and men will praise thee, when thou dost well to thyself.
19 He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light.
20 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

PSALM 50

A Psalm of Asaph

1 The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.
2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.
3 Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.
4 He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people.
5 Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.
6 And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself. Selah.
7 Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God.
8 I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings, to have been continually before me.
9 I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goats out of thy folds.
10 For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.
11 I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine.
12 If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world, and all the fulness thereof, is mine.
13 Is not this of the Lor’d? is not my mouth in thy midst? yet thou sayest, Where is the Lor’d my salvation? where is the word of the Lor’d? hath not my soul magnified him?
14 Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit.
15 Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother’s son.
16 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.
17 Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear them to pieces, and there be none to deliver.
18 Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God.

50:1f 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 thanks—when we do not believe what we say. To let this inconsistency remain shows we are not true followers of God.

50:18 doest well to thyself: do well for yourself.
50:19 the fulness thereof: all that is in it.
50:20 consentedst: joined. been partaker: participated.
50:23 ordereth his conversation: orders his conduct.

49:18 Ps 10:3; Luke 12:19
49:20 Ps 48:12
50:1 Josh 22:22; Ps 113:3
50:2 Deut 33:2; Pss 48:2; 80:1
50:3 Ps 11:12-13
50:4 Dan 7:10
50:6 Pss 75:7; 96:13; 97:6
50:8 Ps 40:6
50:9 Ps 104:24
50:12 Exod 19:5
50:13 Hos 6:6
50:14 Deut 13:1; 21:13
50:16 Isa 29:13
50:17 Nm 9:8; Rom 2:21-22
50:18 Rom 1:12; 1 Tim 3:2
50:19 Pss 10:1; 36:3
50:20 Matt 10:21
50:21 Ps 90:8; Ecles 8:11; Isa 42:14
50:22 Job 8:13; Ps 9:17
50:23 Pss 85:13; 91:16
Psalm 51

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 throughly 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 For thou hast broken my heart; I was full of sorrows; thou hast restored me life again.

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 desirtest 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.

51:1ff 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.
Psalm 52

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.

1 Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? the goodness of God endureth continually.
2 Thy tongue deviseth mischief; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.
3 Thou lovest evil more than good; and lying rather than to speak righteousness. Selah.
4 Thou lovest all devouring words, O deceitful tongue.
5 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.
6 The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him:
7 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.
8 But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.
9 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.

Psalm 53

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

1 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.
2 God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God.
3 Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.
4 Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread: they have not called upon God.
5 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.
6 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.

Psalm 54

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?

1 Save me, O God, by thy name, and judge me by thy strength.
2 Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth.

54:3 1 Sam 10:1
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

3 For strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul: they have not set God before them. Selah.
4 Behold, God is mine helper: the Lord is with him that upholdeth my soul.

5 He shall reward evil unto mine enemies: cut them off in thy truth.
6 I will freely sacrifice unto thee: I will praise thy name, O Lord; for it is good.
7 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
1 Give ear to my prayer, O God; and hide not thyself from my supplication.
2 Attend unto me, and hear me: I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise:
3 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.
4 My heart is sore pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me.
5 Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me.
6 And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! I would haste me away, and be at rest.
7 Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. Selah.
8 I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest.
9 Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues: for I have seen violence and strife in the city.
10 Day and night they go about it upon the walls thereof: mischief also and sorrow are in the midst of it.

11 Wickedness is in the midst thereof: deceit and guile depart not from her streets.
12 For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it the hatred that me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him:
13 But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance.
14 We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company.
15 Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell: for wickedness is in their dwellings, and among them.
16 As for me, I will call upon God; and the Lord shall save me.
17 Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.

Psalm 56

1 Be merciful unto me, O God: for man would swallow me up; he fighting daily oppresseth me.

2 Mine enemies would daily swallow me up: for they be many that fight against me, O thou most High.

3 What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.

4 In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.

5 Every day they wrest my words: all their thoughts are against me for evil.

6 They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps, when they wait for my soul.

7 Shall they escape by iniquity? in thine anger cast down the people, O God.

8 Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle:

9 In God will I praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what man can do unto me.

10 They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps, when they wrest my words.

11 What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.

12 Thy vows are upon me, O God: I will render praises unto thee.

13 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

Psalm 57

1 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.

2 I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me.

3 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.

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).

56:5, 6 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  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 to revenge. Before a new day begins, he wants to “awake early” with his song honoring God’s faithfulness. Instead of spending 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 grisy 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.

Psalm 58

To the chief Musician, Al-taschith, Michtam of David

1 Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation? do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men?

2 Yea, in heart ye work wickedness; ye weigh the violence of your hands in the earth.

3 The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies.

4 Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear;

5 Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.

6 Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth: break out the great teeth of the young lions, O Lord.

7 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.

8 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.

9 Before your pots can feel the thorns, he shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in his wrath.

10 The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.

11 So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.

Psalm 58

58:1f steadfast. 58:7 perfect justice. 58:11 at last.
Theme: Prayer and praise for God’s saving help. God’s constant love is our place of safety in a wicked world.

Author: David

To the chief Musician, Al-taschith, Michtam of David; when Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him.

Deliver me from mine enemies, O my God: defend me from them that rise up against me. Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men.

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.

They run and prepare themselves without my fault: awake to help me, and behold.

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.

They return at evening: they make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.

Behold, they belch out with their mouth: swords are in their lips: for who, say they, doth hear?

But thou, O Lord, shalt laugh at them; thou shalt have all the heathen in derision.

Because of his strength will I wait upon thee: for God is my defence.

The God of my mercy shall prevent me: God shall let me see my desire upon mine enemies.

Slay them not, lest my people forget: scatter them by thy power; and bring them down, O Lord our shield.

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.

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.

And at evening let them return; and let them make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.

Let them wander up and down for meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied.

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.

Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God is my defence, and the God of my mercy.

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)

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.

O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased; O turn thyself to us again.

Thou hast made the earth to tremble; thou hast broken it: heal the breaches thereof, for it shaketh.

When the love of others fails or disappoints us, we can rest in God’s unfailing love.

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?

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 resistance.
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 84:9

60:10
Ps 60:1

60:11
Ps 146:3

60:12
Num 24:15–19
Pss 44:5; 118:16

61:1
Pss 64:1; 86:6

61:2
Ps 18:2; 77:3

61:3
Ps 62:7
Prov 18:10

61:4
Ps 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

62:1
Ps 33:20

62:2
Ps 37:39; 59:17;
89:26

60:3 Thou hast shewed thy people hard things: thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment.

60:4 Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah.

60:5 That thy beloved may be delivered; save with thy right hand, and hear me.

60:6 God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.

60:7 Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of mine head; Judah is my lawgiver;

60:8 Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe: Philistia, triumph thou because of me.

60:9 Who will bring me into the strong city? who will lead me into Edom?

60:10 Will not thou, O God, which hadst cast us off? and thou, O God, which didst not go out with our armies?

60:11 Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man.

60:12 Through God we shall do valiantly: for he 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 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 To the chief Musician upon Neginah, A Psalm of David

1 Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.

2 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.

3 For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.

4 I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah.

5 For thou, O God, hast heard my vows: thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name.

6 Thou wilt prolong the king’s life: and his years as many generations.

7 He shall abide before God for ever: O prepare mercy and truth, which may preserve him.

8 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)

62:1
Ps 33:20

62:2
Ps 37:39; 59:17;
89:26

62:3 Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation.

62:4 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. 60:7 lawgiver: scepter. 60:11 vain: worthless.

61:4 covert: shelter. 61:8 perform: fulfill.

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.
A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.

1 O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thy wall and for thy salvation.

2 My soul longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where there is no water: that spring of life belongeth to those who wait on God.

3 They only consult to cast him down from his excellency: they delight in lies: they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. Selah.

4 God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God. Trust in him at all times; I will lift up my hands in his name.

5 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. Trust not in oppression, and become not vain: set no empty hope.


62:11th

7 My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips:

8 When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches.

9 Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.

10 My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me.

11 But those that seek me, to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth.

12 They shall fall by the sword: they shall be a portion for foxes.

13 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.

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

63:1 Ps 42:2; 84:2
63:2 Ps 27:4
63:3 Ps 69:16
63:4 Ps 28:2; 104:33
63:5 Ps 36:8; 71:23
63:6 Ps 4:4; 16:7; 42:8
63:7 Ps 18:35
63:8 Ps 40:14; 55:15
63:9 Deut 6:13
63:10 Isa 45:23

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.

62:5–12 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

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 commute themselves in 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

1 Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion: 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 thou mayest make his heart glad; and that thou mightest guide him in the land of the living.
5 Blessed is he that keepeth my soul, and heareth my呼告!
6 He keepeth all his dwelling places: he keeps all his dwellings.
7 They bear me up in these matters: they bear me up, and they succour me.
8 They bear me up in the days of trouble: in my calamities they shall know my name.
9 They shall declare in the courts of the king: the Prince of the nations shall bring them to honour.
10 The nations shall hear, and be afraid: the corners of the earth shall tremble at thy doing.

Theme: A complaint against conspiracy. When others conspire against us, we can ask God for protection because he knows everything.

Author: David

65:1, 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.

65:3 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.

65:5–13 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.
9 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.

10 Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof: thou makest it soft with showers: thou blessest the springing thereof.

11 Thou crownest the year with thy goodness: and thy paths drop fatness.

12 They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness: and the little hills rejoice on every side.

13 The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing.

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

1 Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands:

2 Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious.

3 Say unto God, How terrible art thou in thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee.

4 All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing to thy name. Selah.

5 Come and see the works of God: he is terrible in his doing toward the children of men.

6 He turned the sea into dry land: they went through the flood on foot: there did we rejoice in him.

7 He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah.

8 O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard:

9 Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved.

10 For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried.

11 Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water:

12 Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins.

13 But thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place:

14 Whence is that wealth which we had not? for thou has done it: we are thy people and the sheep of thy pasture.

15 I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams; I will offer bullocks with goats. Selah.

16 Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.

17 I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue.

18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:

19 But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.

20 Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.


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 equip 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

To the chief Musician on Neginoth, A Psalm or Song

1 God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; Selah.
2 That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.
3 Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.
4 Let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Selah.
5 Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.
6 Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us.
7 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 of David

1 Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him.
2 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.
3 But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.
4 Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him.
5 A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation.
6 God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry land.
7 O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness; Selah:
8 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.
9 Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance, even the congregation dwelt therein: thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor.
10 Kings of armies did fly: and she that tarried at home divided the spoil.
11 The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it.
12 Kings of armies did flee: and she that tarried at home divided the spoil.

Theme: Joy comes from spreading the news about God around the world.

Author: Anonymous, probably written for one of the harvest festivals
13 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.
14 When the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was white as snow in Salmon.
15 The hill of God is as the hill of Bashan; an high hill as the hill of Bashan.
16 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.
17 The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.
18 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.
19 Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah.
20 He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.
21 But God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses.
22 The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring my people again from the depths of the sea:
23 That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same.
24 They have seen thy goings, O God; even thy goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary.
25 The singers went before; the players on instruments followed after; among them were the damsels playing with timbrels.
26 Bless ye God in the congregations, even the Lord, from the fountain of Israel.
27 There is little Benjamin with their ruler, the princes of Judah and their council, the princes of Zebulun, and the princes of Naphtali.
28 Thy God hath commanded thy strength: strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us.
29 Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee.
30 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.
31 Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.
32 Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord; Selah:
33 To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, which walketh upon the waters of the deep.
34 Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in the clouds.
35 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.

68:13 Gen 49:14
68:14 Josh 10:10
68:15 Ps 36:6
68:16 Deut 33:2
68:17 Dan 7:10
68:18 Eph 4:8
68:19 Pss 55:22; 65:5
68:20 Isa 46:4
68:21 Ps 110:6
68:22 Hab 3:13
68:23 Amos 9:1-3
68:24 Ps 15:3
68:25 Jer 15:3
68:26 Ps 63:2
68:27 Pss 22:22-23; 26:12
68:28 Pss 29:11; 44:4
68:29 Ps 72:10
68:30 Ps 89:10
68:31 Isa 19:19-21; 45:14
68:32 Ps 102:21-22
68:33 Pss 18:10; 29:4
68:34 Deut 10:17
68:35 Pss 29:11; 47:2

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.
### Psalm 69

**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

#### Psalm 69

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**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 23:38; 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 cityside 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.
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 be as a wonder unto many; but 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

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 held 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 desire my hurt take counsel together.

Theme: An urgent prayer for help. It can be your prayer when you're short on time and long on need.

Author: David

Theme: 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
69:30 Ps 28:7; 50:14-15
69:31 Ps 50:13-14
69:32 Ps 22:26; 34:2
69:34 Ps 148:1-13
69:35 Ps 147:2
69:36 Ps 25:13

70:1ff 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.
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 not 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.

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.

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 not 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.

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71:11 Saying, God hath forsaken him: persecute and take him; for there is none to deliver him.

71:12 O God, be not far from me: O my God, make haste for my help.

71:13 Let them be confounded and consumed that are adversaries to my soul; let them be covered with reproach and dishonour that seek my hurt.

71:14 But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more.

71:15 My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof.

71:16 I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.

71:17 O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.

71:18 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.

71:19 Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee!

71:20 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.

71:21 Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.

71:22 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.

71:23 My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee; and my soul, which thou hast redeemed.

71:24 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

Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son.

He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment.

The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness.

He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.

They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations.

He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth.

In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.

He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.

They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust.

The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.

Ye, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.


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).
12 For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper.
13 He shall spare the poor and needy; and shall save the souls of the needy.
14 He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight.
15 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.
16 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.
17 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.
18 Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things.
19 And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen.
20 The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.

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

1 Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.
2 But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.
3 For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
4 For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm.
5 They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men.
6 Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment.
7 Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.
8 They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily.
9 They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.
10 Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them.
11 And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High?
12 Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.
13 Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocence.
14 For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.
15 If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children.
16 When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me.
17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I your end.

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.

73:1f 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.
Psalm 74

Maschil of Asaph

1 O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever? why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?

2 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.

3 Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual desolations; remember thy congregation, the rod of thine inheritance.

4 Thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations; they set up their ensigns for signs.

5 A man is famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees.

6 But now they break down the carved work thereof at once with axes and hammers.

7 They have cast fire into thy sanctuary, they have defiled by casting down the dwelling place of thy name to the ground.

8 They said in their hearts, Let us destroy them together: they have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land.

9 We see not our signs: there is no more any prophet: neither is there among us any that knoweth how long.

10 O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever?

11 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.

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.)

73:19 Num 16:21; Isa 47:11
73:21 Ps 83:4; 48:14
73:22 Ps 16:5; 38:10
73:27 Ps 79:20
73:28 Pss 40:5; 71:7; Heb 10:22

Tears run out.
Against him for a long time, don’t be surprised if his patience into sin and quickly seek God’s forgiveness, his mercy may come generations, but at last it was set aside for judgment. If you fall many years of their sin and idolatry. His patience endured for God’s hot anger against Israel had grown during the age 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.

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.

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.

As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.

Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins.

So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee.

Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand.

Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.

Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.

My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish: thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.

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.

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.

From birth to death God has us continually in his grip. But even in our best years, we must admit that our lives are fallen short of the glory God desires for us.

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.

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.
12 For God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth.
13 Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters.
14 Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces, and gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness.
15 Thou didst cleave the fountain and the flood: thou diddest up mighty rivers.
16 The day is thine, the night also is thine: thou hast prepared the light and the sun.
17 Thou hast set all the borders of the earth: thou hast made summer and winter.
18 Remember this, that the enemy hath reproached, O Lord, and that the foolish people have blasphemed thy name.
19 O deliver not the soul of thy turtledove unto the multitude of the wicked: forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever.
20 Have respect unto the covenant: for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty.
21 O let not the oppressed return ashamed: let the poor and needy praise thy name.
22 Arise, O God, plead thine own cause: remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily.
23 Forget not the voice of thine enemies: the tumult of those that rise up against thee.

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

PSALM 75

To the chief Musician, Al-taschith, A Psalm 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.
2 When I shall receive the congregation I will judge uprightly.
3 The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it. Selah.
4 I said unto the fools, Deal not foolishly: and to the wicked, Lift not up the horn:
5 Lift not up your horn on high: speak not with a stiff neck.
6 For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.
7 But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.
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 it out, and drink them.
9 But I will declare for ever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.
10 All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off, but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.


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 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

1 In Judah is God known: his name is great in Israel. 
2 In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion. 
3 There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle. Selah. 
4 Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey. 
5 The stouthearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep: and none of the men of might have found their hands. 
6 At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep. 
7 Thou, even thou, art to be feared: and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry? 
8 Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still, 
9 When God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth. Selah. 
10 Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain. 
11 Wow, and pay unto the Lord your God: let all that be round about him bring presents unto him that ought to be feared. 
12 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 miracles and previous works can give us courage to continue.

Author: Asaph

77 To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun, A Psalm of Asaph

1 I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice; and he gave ear unto me. 
2 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. 
3 I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah. 
4 Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak. 
5 I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times. 
6 I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart: and my soul made diligent search. 
7 Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? 
8 Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore? 
9 Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Selah. 
10 And I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High. 
11 Will remember the works of the Lord: surely I will remember thy wonders of old. 
12 I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings. 
13 Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary: who is so great a God as our God?

Ps 86:8 mountains of prey: everlasting mountains. Ps 76:5 spoiled: plundered: have found: were able to use. Ps 76:12 terrible: awesome. Ps 86:8 serve ran: hand was stretched out. Ps 76:1f commune with: meditate in.

76:1f 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?
77:1f 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 worshipping 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.
14 Thou art the God that dost wonders: thou hast declared thy strength among the people.
15 Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.
16 The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled.
17 The clouds poured out water: the skies sent out a sound: thine arrows also went abroad.
18 The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven: the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook.
19 Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.
20 Thou leadest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

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

Maschil of Asaph

1 Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth.
2 I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old:
3 Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.
4 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.
5 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:
6 That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children:
7 That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments:
8 And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle.
9 They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law;
10 And forgot his works, and his wonders that he had shewed them.
11 Marvellous things did he in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zaan.
12 He divided the sea, and gave them drink as out of the most deep.
13 He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and caused waters to run down like rivers.
14 He ceased not to be sharp in the highness of the mountains; he broke the children of Israel among rocks.
15 He gave them drink also in the desert, and led them out into the waste land.

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 10:5–13, 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 education—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 these 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.
20 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?
21 Therefore the Lord heard this, and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel;
22 Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation:
23 Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven,
24 And had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven.
25 Man did eat angels’ food: he sent them meat to the full.
26 He caused an east wind to blow in the heaven: and by his power he brought in the south wind.
27 He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea:
28 And he let it fall in the midst of their camp, round about their habitations.
29 So they did eat, and were well filled: for he gave them their own desire;
30 They were not estranged from their lust. But while their meat was yet in their mouths,
31 The wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen men of Israel.
32 For all this they sinned still, and believed not for his wondrous works.
33 Therefore their days did he consume in vanity, and their years in trouble.
34 When he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned and inquired early after God.
35 And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer.
36 Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues:
37 For their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant.
38 But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time he turned his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath.
39 For he remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.
40 How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert!
41 Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.
42 They remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy.
43 How he had wrought his signs in Egypt, and his wonders in the field of Zoan;
44 And had turned their rivers into blood; and their floods, that they could not drink.
45 He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them; and frogs, which destroyed them.
46 He gave also their increase unto the caterpillar, and their labour unto the locust.
47 He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore trees with frost.
48 He gave up their cattle also to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunderbolts.
49 He cast them out of their habitations; their enemies compassed them about.
50 He gave way to his anger; he spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence;
51 And smote all the firstborn in Egypt; the chief of their strength in the tabernacles of Ham:
52 But made his own people to go forth like sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.
53 And he led them on safely, so that they feared not: but the sea overwhelmed their enemies.
54 And he brought them to the border of his sanctuary, even to this mountain, which his right hand had purchased.
55 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.

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.
58 Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies:
59 But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers: they were turned aside like a
deceitful bow.
60 For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with
their graven images.
61 When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel:
62 So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men;
63 And delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand.
64 He gave his people over also unto the sword; and was wroth with his inheritance.
65 The fire consumed their young men; and their maidens were not given to marriage.
66 Their priests fell by the sword; and their widows made no lamentation.
67 Then the LORD awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouseth by rea-
son of wine.
68 And he smote his enemies in the hinder parts: he put them to a perpetual reproach.
69 Moreover he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim:
70 But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved.
71 And he built his sanctuary like high palaces, like the earth which he hath established
for ever.
72 He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds:
73 From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and
Israel his inheritance.
74 So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skilful-
ess of his hands.

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
levied 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.

78:58 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.
78:61-72 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 pres-
ent 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.
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.

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.

Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die;

And render unto our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom their reproach, wherewith they have reproached thee, O Lord.

So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever: we will shew forth thy praise to all generations.

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

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.

Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh stir up thy strength, and come and save us.

Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.

O Lord God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?

Thou feedest them with the bread of tears; and givest them tears to drink in great measure.

Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours: and our enemies laugh among themselves.

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.

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.

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Thou feedest them with the bread of tears; and givest them tears to drink in great measure.

Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours: and our enemies laugh among themselves.

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.
81 To the chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm of Asaph

1 Sing aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.
2 Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery.
3 Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day.
4 For this was a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob.
5 This he ordained in Joseph for a testimony, when he went out through the land of Egypt: where He heard a language that I understood not.
6 I removed his shoulder from the burden: his hands were delivered from the pots.
7 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.
8 Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me;
9 If thou wilt hear the voice of my commandments, and wilt keep my judgments;
10 And shew thy truth unto thy servant; and teach me thy ways.
11 My soul is made exceeding sad; but with thee is joy: in thy temple is fullness of joy; within my bones doth the fire burn.
12 O Lord, let me know mine end, and the number of my days, as thou hast said.
13 Do not forsake me, O Lord: thou art mine help: make thy face to shine upon thy servant; save me, for mine enemies persecute me.
14 Send up thine hand from above; strengthen thou me for thy love, and for thine unfailing mercy.
15 Satisfy me, O Lord, with a good thing: for the joy of thy salvation I will render thanks unto thee.
16 For I shall die, and go to my fathers; I shall be not reckoned to the generation of thy people.
17 The sorrows of death compassed me about; the pangs of hell laid hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.
18 Then I called upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, save me out of all my troubls.
19 Do not turn away thy face from me: hasten thy mercy unto me, and answer me:
20 If thou be pleased with me, O Lord, then shall my enemy be put to shame: and in thy righteousness deliver me.
21 Let them know that I wait for thee, and that in thy face is my salvation.
22 Let them be ashamed and confusion come upon all the men of whoredoms.
23 Blessed is the God that helpeth me; and they that help me from his countenance.
24 They that seek me shall find me: to them that seek me shall I appear, and I will shew myself unto them.
25 But to mine enemies I will say, Behold, they err that straiten me: but as for me, I will trust in thee.

80:8 2 Chr 20:7  Ps 44:2  Isa 52:7  Jer 2:21; 11:17  Ezek 17:6, 23  Amos 9:15
80:9 Exod 22:28  Isa 5:2  Hos 14:5
80:10 Ps 89:40  Isa 5:5
80:11 Jer 5:6
80:12 2 Chr 36:19  Ps 39:14  Jer 52:13
80:13 Ps 89:21
80:14 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

81:1–4 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. 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.

81:5–8 Israel's holidays reminded the nation of God's great miracles. They were times of rejoicing and times to renew one's relationship with him. The holidays were often associated with 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.

81:9–11 Let us be thankful for God's mercy. People often give God credit for things they do not deserve. Let us show our appreciation for his blessings. Conduct an inventory of your spiritual life right now. In what ways are you allowing God to affect your daily decisions?
83:1
Pss 28:1; 109:1

83:2
Pss 2:1; 81:15
Isa 17:12

83:3
Ps 3:20

83:4
Esth 3:5-6

83:5
Ps 2:2

83:6
Gen 25:12-16
2 Chr 20:1, 10
Ps 137:3

83:7
Isa 4:1-5:2
2 Chr 20:10
Ezek 27:3-9

83:8
Judg 4:22-23

83:9
Judg 7:25; 8:21

83:10
2 Chr 20:11

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 Zalmunna, see Judges 8:21.)
11O my God, make them like a wheel, as the stubble before the wind.
12As the fire burneth a wood, and as the flame setteth the mountains on fire;
13So persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm.
14Fill their faces with shame; that they may seek thy name, O Lord.
15Let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish:
16That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth.

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

1How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!
2My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.
3Yea, the swallow 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.
4Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah.
5Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee: in whose heart are the ways of them.
6Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools.
7They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.
8O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah.
9Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.
10For 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.
11For the Lord is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.
12O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.

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

1O Lord, thou hast been favourable unto thy land: thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.
2Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin. Selah.
3Thou hast taken away all thy wrath: thou hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger.
4Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger toward us to cease.
5Wilt thou be angry with us for ever? wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations?

84:14 Deut 32:22
83:18 Ps 59:13
83:16 Ps 109:29
83:15 Ps 58:9
83:14 Ps 58:9
83:13 Ps 78:38
83:12 Ps 62:12
83:11 Ps 62:12
83:10 Ps 62:12
83:9 Ps 62:12
83:8 Ps 62:12
83:7 Ps 62:12
83:6 Ps 62:12
83:5 Ps 62:12
83:4 Ps 62:12
83:3 Ps 62:12
83:2 Ps 62:12
83:1 Ps 62:12
82:14 Ps 74:1, 80:4
82:13 Ps 74:1, 80:4
82:12 Ps 74:1, 80:4
82:11 Ps 74:1, 80:4
82:10 Ps 74:1, 80:4
82:9 Ps 74:1, 80:4
82:8 Ps 74:1, 80:4
82:7 Ps 74:1, 80:4
82:6 Ps 74:1, 80:4
82:5 Ps 74:1, 80:4
82:4 Ps 74:1, 80:4
82:3 Ps 74:1, 80:4
82:2 Ps 74:1, 80:4
82:1 Ps 74:1, 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 can 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.
As the writer cries out for God's intervention, he can spiritual life, ask God to give you a fresh touch of his love and for him. If you need renewal in your church, family, or personal and individuals. He can pour out his love on us, renewing our love them back to spiritual life. God is capable of reviving both churches righteousness (85:13). This psalm illustrates that the greater the describe what God can do for those who welcome his herald—almost see, taste, and hear God's response. These five verses 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). 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.

Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee? Shew us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation. 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. Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase. 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

A Prayer of David

1 Bow down thine ear, O Lord, hear me: for I am poor and needy. Preserve my soul; for I am holy: O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee. Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily. Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee. Give ear, O Lord, unto my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplications. In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee: for thou wilt answer me. Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto thy works.

All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name. For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone. Teach me thy way, O Lord; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name. I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore. For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell. 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. But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth. O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me: give thy strength unto thy servant, and save the son of thine handmaid.

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.

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.
Shew me a token for good; that they which hate me may see it, and be ashamed: because thou, Lord, hast helped me, and comforted me.

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

1. His foundation is in the holy mountains.
2. The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.
3. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah.
4. I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me: behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this man was born there.
5. And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her.
6. The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah.
7. As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there: all my springs are in thee.

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 Mahalah Leannoth, Maschil of Heman the Ezrahite

1. O Lord, God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee:
2. Let my prayer come before thee: incline thine ear unto my cry;
3. For my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave.
4. I am counted with them that go down into the pit: I am as a man that hath no strength:
5. 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.
6. Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps.
7. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. Selah.
8. Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me; thou hast made me an abomination among the dead.
9. Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction: Lord, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee.
10. Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise thee? Selah.
11. Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in destruction?
12. Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?
13. But unto thee have I cried, O Lord: and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee.
14. Lord, why castest thou my soul? why hidest thou thy face from me?

88:17 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 despair 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.
The congregation of the "saints" or holy ones generally mated by Christ's future reign over the world (see Revelation 22:5). Concerning David's never-ending dynasty, which will be consummated with his reign of Jesus Christ, David's descendant. Verse 27 is a prophecy there, these verses can only look forward prophetically to the future reign of Jesus Christ, David's descendant. God had promised to make David the mightiest king on earth (2 Samuel 7:8–16). Because Jerusalem was destroyed and kings no longer reigned and to keep his descendants on the throne forever (2 Samuel 7:8–16). Because Jerusalem was destroyed and kings no longer reigned (2 Samuel 7).

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

89:1 Maschil of Ethan the Ezrahite

1 I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations. 2 For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens. 3 I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, 4 Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah. 5 And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O Lord: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints. 6 For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord? 7 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. 8 O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee? 9 Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillst them. 10 Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain; thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm. 11 The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: as for the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them. 12 The north and the south thou hast created them: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name. 13 Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand. 14 Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face. 15 Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. 16 In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted. 17 For thou art the glory of their strength: and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted. 18 For the Lord is our defence; and the Holy One of Israel is our king. 19 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.
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.

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.

89:34–37 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,
3 Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.
4 For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.
5 Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up.
6 In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.
7 For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled.
8 Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.
9 For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told.
10 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.
11 Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.
12 So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.
13 Return, O Lord, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants.
14 O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.
15 Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil.
16 Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children.
17 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

1 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
2 I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.
3 Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.
4 He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.
5 Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;
6 Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.
7 A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.
8 Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.

10:9 spend our years as a tale that is told: finish our years with a sigh. 10:10 fly away: are gone. 10:11 let it repent thee concerning: have compassion on. 11:3 noisome: fatal. 11:4 shield and buckler: large and small shield. 11:6 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 nation was divided, exile came—but through it all, a remnant of God’s people remained faithful. 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 no limitations. God is completely unrestricted by time. Because he is eternal, we can depend on him.

9:8 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?”

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.
9 Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation;
10 There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.
11 For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.
12 They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.
13 Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.
14 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.
15 He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.
16 With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.

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

1 It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High:
2 To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night,
3 Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound.
4 For thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands.
5 O Lord, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep.
6 A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this.
7 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:
8 But thou, Lord, art most high for evermore.
9 For, lo, thine enemies shall perish; all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.
10 But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn: I shall be anointed with fresh oil.
11 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.
12 The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.
13 Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.
14 They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing.
15 To shew that the Lord is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.


92:10 horn: a 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 2:10; Acts 27:20, 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 thanking 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

Psalm 93

1 The Lord reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength, whereby he hath girded himself: the world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved.

2 Thy throne is established of old: thou art from everlasting.

3 The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves.

4 The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea.

5 Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever.

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

Psalm 94

1 O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself.

2 Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth: render a reward to the proud.

3 Lord, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph?

4 How long shall they utter and speak hard things? and all the workers of iniquity boast themselves?

5 They break in pieces thy people, O Lord, and afflict thine heritage.

6 They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless.

7 Yet they say, The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.

8 Understand, ye brutish among the people: and ye fools, when will ye be wise?

9 He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?

10 He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct? he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?

11 The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.

12 Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law;

13 That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked.

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.
**Psalm 95**

1. **For the Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance.**
2. **But judgment shall return unto righteousness: and all the upright in heart shall follow it.**
3. **Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?**
4. **Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence.**
5. **When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy, O Lord, held me up.**
6. **In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul.**
7. **Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?**
8. **They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood.**
9. **But the Lord is my defence; and my God is the rock of my refuge.**
10. **And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their wickedness; yea, the Lord our God shall cut them off.**

**Theme:** An invitation to worship God

**Author:** David

1. **Come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.**
2. **Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.**
3. **For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.**
4. **In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also.**
5. **The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.**
6. **O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker.**
7. **For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.**
8. **Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness:**
9. **When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work.**
10. **Forty years long was I grieved with Israel.**

**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

1. **Sing unto the Lord a new song; sing unto the Lord, all the earth.**
2. **Sing unto the Lord, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day.**
3. **Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people.**
4. **For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods.**
5. **For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the Lord made the heavens.**
6. **Honor and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.**
7. **Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength.**

**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 rauccous 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?
8 Give unto the L ord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts.
9 O worship the L ord in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth.
10 Say among the heathen that the L ord reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteousness.
11 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof.
12 Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice.
13 Before the L ord: 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 1 The L ord reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.
2 Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.
3 A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about.
4 His lightnings enlighten the world: the earth saw, and trembled.
5 The hills melted like wax at the presence of the L ord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.
6 The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory.
7 Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him, all ye gods.
8 Zion heard, and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced because of thy judgments, O L ord.
9 For thou, L ord, art high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods.
10 Ye that love the L ord, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.
11 Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.
12 Rejoice in the L ord, 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 1 O sing unto the L ord a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.
2 The L ord hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen.
3 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.
4 Make a joyful noise unto the L ord, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.

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 over-looks no sin when he loves. Praise him for his promise to save you and return again.
5 Sing unto the Lōrd with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm.
6 With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the Lōrd, the King.
7 Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.
8 Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together.
9 Before the Lōrd; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.

Theme: Praise for God's fairness and holiness. Because God is perfectly just and fair, we can trust him completely.

Author: Anonymous

99 1 The Lōrd reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved.
2 The Lōrd is great in Zion; and he is high above all the people.
3 Let them praise thy great and terrible name; for it is holy.
4 The king's strength also loveth judgment; thou dost establish equity, thou executest judgment and righteousness in Jacob.
5 Exalt ye the Lōrd our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy.
6 Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon the Lōrd, and he answered them.
7 He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar: they kept his testimonies, and the ordinance that he gave them.
8 Thou answerest them, O Lōrd our God: thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance on their inventions.
9 Exalt the Lōrd our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the Lōrd our God is holy.

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

1 Make a joyful noise unto the Lōrd, all ye lands.
2 Serve the Lōrd with gladness: come before his presence with singing.
3 Know ye that the Lōrd he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.
5 For the Lōrd is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.


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 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.
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

1 I will sing of mercy and judgment: unto thee, O Lord, will I sing.
2 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.
3 I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.
4 A froward heart shall depart from me: I will not know a wicked person.
5 Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer.
6 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.
7 He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.
8 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

1 Hear my prayer, O Lord, and let my cry come unto thee.
2 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.
3 For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth.
4 My heart is smitten, and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread.
5 I am like a pelican of the wilderness: I am like an owl of the desert.
6 I am like a pelican of the wilderness. I am like an owl of the desert.
7 I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top.
8 Mine enemies reproach me all the day; and they that are mad against me are sworn against me.
9 For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping.
10 Because of thine indignation and thy wrath: for thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down.
11 My days are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass.
12 But thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever; and thy remembrance unto all generations.
13 Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come.
14 For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof.
15 So the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory.

101:1f 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.
16 When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory.
17 He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.
18 This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord.
19 For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth;
20 To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death;
21 To declare the name of the Lord in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem;
22 When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the Lord.
23 He weakened my strength in the way; he shortened my days.
24 I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: thy years are a lengthening of life.
25 Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands.
26 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:
27 But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.
28 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

1 Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.
2 Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:
3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;
4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;
5 Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.
6 The Lord executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.
7 He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.
8 The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.
9 He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.
10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.
11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.
12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.
13 Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.

103:26 wax: grow. a vesture: clothing. 103:9 chide: accuse.
104:4, 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.

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.

104, 11 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; Genesis 1:3); day two, sky and water (104:2, 3; Genesis 1:8); 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.

104:18–22 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 (103:19). Is your life a blessing to the Lord?

104:20–22 “For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.” (2 Kgs 2:11; 6:17; Amos 9:6; Ps 18:10; Dan 7:9; Ps 104:18; Is 29:16; Eccl 12:7; Gen 3:19). The same power that undergirds the world also provides a firm foundation for believers.
6 Thou coverest it with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains.

7 At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.

8 They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them.

9 Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth.

10 He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills.

11 They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst.

12 By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches.

13 He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.

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;

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.

16 The trees of the L ORD are full of sap: the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted;

17 Where the birds make their nests: as for the stork, the fir trees are her house.

18 The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats; and the rocks for the conies.

19 He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down.

20 Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.

21 The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.

22 The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens.

23 Man goeth forth unto his work, and to his labour until the evening.

24 O L ORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.

25 So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.

26 There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein.

27 These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season.

28 That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.

29 Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.

30 Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.

31 Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.

32 He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills, and they smoke.

33 These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season.

34 As long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.

35 Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless thou the L ORD, O my soul. Praise ye the L ORD.

**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}

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105

1 O give thanks unto the L ORD; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people.

2 Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works.

3 Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the L ORD.

4 He is their rock, their fortress, and their redeemer.

5 He is their shepherd, and they dwell in the house of L ORD.

6 He gathereth the lambs into his arms: he汇集eth them in his bosom: he leadeth them upon the paths of righteousness.

7 He hath prepared for us abundant provisions: he filleth us with good.

8 O L ORD, let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more.

9 For they speak against thee with their lips: they lift up their heart against thee.

10 They have also spoken against thee with their tongues: they meditate mischief and devise evil against thee.

11 But thou, O L ORD, shall laugh at them; thou shalt have no fear of their rage.

12 Doth not thy adversaries readily mock thee? do they call thee blasphemer?

13 Do they not speak against thee with their lips? do they meditate mischief against thee, and devise evil in their heart?

14 Yea, the tongue of them that speak against thee doth travail with iniquity, and thou shalt be unto them a terror.

15 But thou, O L ORD, shalt laugh at them; thou shalt have no fear of their anger, nor be perturbed at their disturbance.

16 Shall they rend thy robe, and seize upon thy flesh? they shall be as the stubble that the fowls eat.

17 But thou, O L ORD, shalt laugh at them; thou shalt have no fear of their anger, nor be perturbed at their disturbance.

18 He covereth the face of the deep; he hideth his cloud upon the waters.

19 He made a path to the sea: he caused the noise of his waters to go forth.

20 He sent signs in the earth; and came down: he shewed his power in theạcrd.

21 He raised up for David his anointed one, whom he took from the sheepfold.

22 He gave him the tongue of a shepherd: he also hideth his soul in the dust.

23 He gave him his heart: he also made all his meat to be fat.

24 The L ORD shall reign for ever: the L ORD shall reign.

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**Notes:**

6 Thou coverest it with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains.

7 At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.

8 They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them.

9 Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth.

10 He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills.

11 They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst.

12 By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches.

13 He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.

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;

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.

16 The trees of the L ORD are full of sap: the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted;

17 Where the birds make their nests: as for the stork, the fir trees are her house.

18 The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats; and the rocks for the conies.

19 He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down.

20 Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.

21 The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.

22 The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens.

23 Man goeth forth unto his work, and to his labour until the evening.

24 O L ORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.

25 So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.

26 There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein.

27 These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season.

28 That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.

29 Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.

30 Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.

31 Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.

32 He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills, and they smoke.

33 These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season.

34 As long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.

35 Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless thou the L ORD, O my soul. Praise ye the L ORD.
If God seems far away, persist in your search for him.

Three other psalms are also hymns recounting Israel’s history—
885 PSALM 105

8:10 chosen 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 17:8–8). 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).

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 3:18–22). 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.
Praise ye the Lord. O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

1 Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? who can shew forth all his praise?

2 Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times.

3 Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation;

4 That I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation,

5 For he remembered his holy promise, the word which he sware unto Abraham his servant.

6 And I said, He shall surely comfort us; even he shall surely enter into the tabernacle of judgment, he shall stand upon the shield of truth.

7 Then remembered he Jacob, and reestablished him, and he saved him from all his afflictions.

8 And he made known his words toward Jacob, his covenant with Abraham, and his statutes with Isaac.

9 And he confirmed them to Jacob for a statute, and to Israel as an everlasting covenant.

10 That he might commandment his statutes and judgments, and make them known unto Israel in what things he should shew them.

11 And the heavens declared his righteousness; and all the people saw his glory.

12 For he remembered that their works were evil, and the sin of their concupiscence was not hid from his sight.

13 They provoked him also to anger with their carcases, and stoned him with their sins.

14 And they spurned his spirit, and they hardened their heart in their sin; they were as a snail that doth not hasten.

15 They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with vanity of what he thought not.

16 And they sinned against the most high, and they feared not his glory:

17 They forgot his works, and his wonders that he had wrought among them.

18 And he smote with a very evil spirit of latitude, and they cannot freely discern: so they provoked him at the similitude: image.

19 And they provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with vanity of what he thought not.

20 They provoked him to jealousy with the similitude: image, to the abomination of heathen:

21 Wondrous works in the land of Ham, terrible things by the Red sea.

22 And he made them rejoice as with wine, and led them in their paths for ever.

23 O ye children of Abraham, hear the word of the Lord; ye children of Jacob, hear the law of the Lord.

24 The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.

25 The Lord is good in his goodnesse, his word endureth for ever.

26 As for the words of his mouth, they are very pure: but the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

27 Before Me a great people, which are the Lord's, came to Baal-peor to worship gods foreign to them:

28 But the Lord being pure himself, he came with his angels.

29 And he because of their iniquity turned again, and was wroth; he abhorred the carriage of their sins.

30 Therefore the Lord said, I will not again be angry with them for ever:

31 Therefore now let Abraham rejoice, and let Isaac be grieved, and let Jacob be angry:

32 For when I come out of Egypt, I will not look upon their abominations, upon their graven images: I will not bear the reproach of their images.

33 I will make them know that the Lord am I, and that there is no other God; and that I and only I am God, and there is none like me.

34 There is none that can save the soul of man, from the hand of God.

35 If I were to set up mine own judgment, mine own glory should be extolled.

36 For whom have I held up mine hope, unless the Lord? who is like unto the Lord our God?

37 Thou dost divide the sea by thy power; thou didst break the heads of the serpents in the waters.

38 Thou didst send forth the stream of thy righteousness: thou didst train the heart of Jacob thy people.

39 Thou didst divide the sea, and madest a path through the midwater: thou didst bring forth thy people armed with thy strength.

40 And thou didst lead with them in the path of thy righteousness; thou didst do it in the presence of thine enemies; thou didst make thyself a name against thine adversaries.

41 And they came and they possessed the land, which they had wrought with their hands.

42 Even thou, O Lord, dost establish them for a heritage: thou didst make them the inheritance of the poor for ever.

43 The heathen shall fear thy name; thou shalt bless thy land in the sight of them.

44 The Lord shall bless thee, and he shall bless thy bread and water.

45 And he shall extend thee stronghold without, and strongholds within, against the mouth of the foe.

46 He shall bless thee out of Zion: he shall see thy good, and all the treasures of thine house.

47 Peace be within thy house; both the husband and the wife within thee, and thou shalt be fruitful, and prosper in thy going out, and in thy coming in.

48 The Lord shall give thee an exceeding abundancy of joy in thy house; with the blood of thy servants thou hast been justified.

49 Many, many children shall be born to thee, and thou shalt come to the wealth of Egypt.

50 And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.

51 He spake also of the curse, and he caused them to return from his sight; they made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image.

52 He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.

53 They envied Moses also in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the Lord.

54 And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.

55 They soon forgat his works; they waited not for his counsel:

56 But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert.

57 And he said unto them, Wherefore do ye tempt the Lord? for ye test him in the desert.

58 And they spurned his spirit, and they hardened their heart in their sin; they were as a snail that doth not hasten.

59 And they provoked him to jealousy with foreign gods, with vanity of what he thought not.

60 He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.

61 And he said unto them, Wherefore have ye done thus unto me, ye transgressors of my covenant?

62 For this ye have not spared me the sole offering and the very best of all the things that were devoted unto me, and ye have offered me men and women.

63 And I will not any more be a consecration unto you for the burnt offering: and I will not receive the meat offering thereof any more, neither will I accept an offering of the bread of my face:

64 Nor will I take sweet odours of incense from you, nor will I accept your dainties: but let them be for the Gentiles; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

65 And I will send wild beasts before you, and they shall walk before you;

66 And will drive out the nations from before you, and will possess their land; but I will not give thee to be their slave: I am the Lord your God.

67 If you're not getting what you want, perhaps God knows it is not in your best interest. Trust in his care and provision.
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.

24 Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not his word.

25 But murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord.

26 Therefore he lifted up his hand against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness:

27 To overthrow their seed also among the nations, and to scatter them in the lands.

28 They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead.

29 Thus they provoked him to anger with their inventions: and the plague brake in upon them.

30 Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment: and so the plague was stayed.

31 And that was counted unto him for righteousness unto all generations for evermore.

32 They angered him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes:

33 Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.

34 They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the Lord commanded them:

35 But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.

36 And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them.

37 Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils.

38 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.

39 Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions.

40 Therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled against his people, inasmuch that he abhorred his own inheritance.

41 And he gave them into the hand of the heathen: and they that hated them ruled over them.

42 Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand.

43 Many times did he deliver them; but they provoked him with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity.

44 Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry:

45 And remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies.

46 He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captive.

47 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.

48 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the Lord.

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).

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.”

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.

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

1. Give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.
2. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;
3. And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.
4. They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in.
5. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.
6. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and hedelivered them out of their distresses.
7. And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.
8. Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!
9. For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.
10. Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron;
11. Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High:
12. Therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and there was none to help.
13. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses.
14. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder.
15. Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!
16. For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder.
17. Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.
18. Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death.
19. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses.
20. He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.
21. Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!
22. And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.

107:1f 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.

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 lostness can receive the offer of Jesus to satisfy these needs. Jesus is the Way (John 1:4-6), 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?

107:10–18 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.
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.

108.1f 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.
PSALM 109 890

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

1 Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise; 109:1
2 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. 109:2
3 They compassed me about also with words of hatred; and fought against me without a cause. 109:3
4 For my love they are my adversaries: but I give myself unto prayer. 109:4
5 And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love. 109:5
6 Set thou a wicked man over him: and let Satan stand at his right hand. 109:6
7 When he shall be judged, let him be condemned: and let his prayer become sin. 109:7
8 Let his days be few; and let another take his office. 109:8
9 Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. 109:9
10 Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg: let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places. 109:10
11 Let the extortioner catch all that he hath; and let the strangers spoil his labour. 109:11
12 Let there be none to extend mercy unto him: neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children. 109:12
13 Let his posterity be cut off; and in the generation following let their name be blotted out. 109:13
14 Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the Lord; and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out. 109:14
15 Let them be before the Lord continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth. 109:15
16 Because that he remembered not to shew mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart. 109:16
17 As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him: as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him. 109:17
18 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. 109:18
19 Let it be unto him as the garment which covereth him, and for a girdle wherewith he is girded continually.
20 Let this be the reward of mine adversaries from the Lord, and of them that speak evil against my soul. 109:20
21 But do thou for me, O God the Lord, for thy name's sake: because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me. 109:21
22 For I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me. 109:22
23 I am gone like the shadow when it declineth: I am tossed up and down as the locust. 109:23
24 My knees are weak through fasting; and my flesh faileth of fatness. 109:24
25 I am like a water, and like oil into his bones. 109:25
26 Help me, O Lord my God: O save me according to thy mercy: 109:26
27 That they may know that this is thy hand: that thou, Lord, hast done it. 109:27
28 Let them curse, but bless thou: when they arise, let them be ashamed; but let thy servant rejoice. 109:28


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.

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.
PSALM 111

Theme: The credentials for the Messiah. Jesus is the Messiah.

Author: David

110:1 A Psalm of David

1. The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.
2. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.
3. 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.
4. The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.
5. The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.
6. He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.
7. 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. Praise ye the Lord. I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation.
2. The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.
3. His work is honourable and glorious; and his righteousness endureth for ever.
4. He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the Lord is gracious and full of compassion.
5. He hath given meat unto them that fear him: he will ever be mindful of his covenant.
6. His work is perfect: all his doings are done in truth and uprightness.
7. The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure.
8. They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness.
9. He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name.

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).

110:7–7 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.
Praise ye the LORD. Praise, O ye servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD. Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time forth and for evermore.
present us with formidable challenges. But to God, who controls 
quake (Exodus 19:18). The mountain trembled in God’s presence.
Psalms 115—118 are traditionally sung at the Pass-
you can see. To tremble at God’s presence means to recognize 
and glory, which are far more awesome than the natural wonders 
nature, they are as nothing. When observing the power of an ocean 
114:7 When God gave the Law at Mount Sinai, there was an earth-
114:8 Erod 17:5-6 Deut 8:15
115:1 Ps 96:9
115:2 Erod 17:5-6 Deut 8:15
115:3 Ps 103:19; 135:6 Dan 4:35
115:4-11 Ps 135:15-20
115:5 Jer 10:5
115:6 Ps 135:18
115:7 Ps 135:18
115:8 Ps 133:20; 62:8
115:9 Ps 133:20; 135:20
115:10 Ps 98:3
115:11 Ps 128:1, 4
115:12 Deut 1:1
115:13 Gen 1:1; 14:19
115:14 Ps 8:6; 89:11
115:15 Ps 6:5; 31:17
115:16 Ps 113:2
116:1 Pss 18:1; 66:19
116:2 Pss 17:6; 31:2
116:3-5 The sea saw it, and fled: Jordan was driven back.
116:4-8 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.)
116:4 The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs.
116:5 What did thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back?
116:6 Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams; and ye little hills, like lambs?
116:7 Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob;
116:8 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

115:1 Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and 
for thy truth’s sake.
115:2 Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God?
115:3 But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.
115:4 Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men’s hands.
115:5 They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not:
115:6 They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not:
115:7 They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak 
they through their throat.
115:8 They that make them are like unto them; so is one that trusteth in them.
115:9 O Israel, trust thou in the Lord: he is their help and their shield.
115:10 O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord: he is their help and their shield.
115:11 Ye that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord: he is their help and their shield.
115:12 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.
115:13 He will bless them that fear the Lord, both small and great.
115:14 The Lord shall increase you more and more, you and your children.
115:15 Ye are blessed of the Lord which made heaven and earth.
115:16 The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord’s: but the earth hath he given to the 
children of men.
115:17 The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.
115:18 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

116:1 I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.
116:2 Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long 
as I live.

114:7 When God gave the Law at Mount Sinai, there was an earth-
quake (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 Pass-
over 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?”

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 care-
fully to every prayer, and answering each prayer in order to give you 
his best.

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.

116:13 “O Lord our God, how excellent is thy name in 
time to come!” says the psalm writer. What a magnificent thing to 
say! In every generation, the psalm writer always had complete 
trust in God’s name. May we also do this today.

116:14-15 The psalmist expresses his relief at being saved 
from death. When we are saved, we should also express our 
relief and praise the Lord. Worship is not a repayment for what 
God has done. Worship is a thankful response and an act of praise.

The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.

Then called I upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.

Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful.

The Lord preserves the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me.

Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.

For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.

I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.

I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted:

1 I said in my haste, All men are liars.

What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?

I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.

I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people.

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.

O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds.

I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord.

In the courts of the Lord’s house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the Lord.

Theme: Another reason for praise—God’s love for the whole world. We should praise God for his unlimited love.

Author: Anonymous

117

O Praise the Lord, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people.

For his merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of the Lord endureth for ever. Praise ye the Lord.

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

O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: because his mercy endureth for ever.

Let Israel now say, that his mercy endureth for ever.

Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy endureth for ever.

I called upon the Lord in distress: the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place.

The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?

The Lord taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me.

It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.

It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.

All nations compassed me about: but in the name of the Lord will I destroy them.

They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about: but in the name of the Lord will I destroy them.

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.

Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall: but the Lord helped me.

Loosed my bonds: freed me from my chains. In a large place: free. compassed: surrounded.

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).

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.

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.

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.
**Psalm 119**

**Verse 1 - 17**

1. The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation.
2. The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly.
3. The right hand of the Lord is exalted: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly.
4. He shall not be moved: until he do the judgment of the heathen.
5. Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and will praise the Lord.
6. This gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter.
7. This is the gate of the Lord; through which the righteous shall enter.
8. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart.
9. They do no iniquity: they walk in his ways.
10. They are blessed: who keep his testimonies.
11. They do no iniquity: they walk in his ways.
12. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart.
13. They do no iniquity: they walk in his ways.
14. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart.
15. They do no iniquity: they walk in his ways.
16. They are blessed: who keep his testimonies.
17. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart.

**Verses 18 - 29**

18. Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.
19. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart.
20. They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways.
21. Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently.
22. O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!
24. Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord: we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord.
25. God is the Lord, which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.
26. Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: thou art my God, I will exalt thee.
27. 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

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**Psalm 119, verses 22 - 29**

22. 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).

23. 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.

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 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.

25. 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 beginning 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.

26. 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.
PSALM 119

11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.
12 Blessed art thou, O Lord: teach me thy statutes.
13 With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth.
14 I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches.
15 I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways.
16 I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.

GIMEL

17 Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live, and keep thy word.
18 Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.
19 I am a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me.
20 My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times.
21 Thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed, which do err from thy commandments.
22 Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have kept thy testimonies.
23 Princes also did sit and speak against me: but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes.
24 Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors.

DALETH

25 My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word.
26 I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me: teach me thy statutes.
27 Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works.
28 My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according to thy word.
29 Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way.
30 I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid before me.
31 I have stuck unto thy testimonies: O Lord, put me not to shame.
32 I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.

HE

33 Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end.
34 Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.
35 Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight.
36 Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.
37 Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken thou me in thy way.
38 Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear.
39 Turn away my reproach which I fear: for thy judgments are good.
40 Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness.

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.
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 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.
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.

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.

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 they 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! sweeter than honey to my mouth!
104. Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.

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 an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart.
112. I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes alway, even unto the end.

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 evil doers: 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.

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.
Psalm 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 hate and abhor lying: I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil.
8 Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but my heart standeth in awe of thy word.
9 Consider how I love thy precepts: quicken me, O Lord, according to thy loving-kindness.

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

Psalm 120 is a “step” along “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.

Psalm 120

1. Salvation is far from the wicked; for they seek not thy statutes. 9155
2. Great are thy tender mercies, O Lord: quicken me according to thy judgments. 9156
3. Many are my persecutors and mine enemies: yet do I not decline from thy testimonies. 9157
4. Behld the transgressors, and was grieved: because they kept not thy word. 9158
5. Consider how I love thy precepts: quicken me, O Lord, according to thy loving-kindness. 9159

6. Thy word is true from the beginning, and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever. 9160

SCHIN

7. Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but my heart standeth in awe of thy word. 9161
8. I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil. 9162
9. I hate and abhor lying: but thy law do I love. 9163
10. Seven times a day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments. 9164
11. Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them. 9165
12. Lord, I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments. 9166
13. My soul hath kept thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly. 9167
14. I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies: for all my ways are before thee. 9168

TAU

15. Let my cry come near before thee, O Lord: give me understanding according to thy word. 9169
16. Let my supplication come before thee: deliver me according to thy word. 9170
17. My lips shall utter praise, when thou hast taught me thy statutes. 9171
18. My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness. 9172
19. Let thine hand help me: for I have chosen thy precepts. 9173
20. I have longed for thy salvation, O Lord: and thy law is my delight. 9174
21. Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee; and let thy judgments help me. 9175
22. I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments. 9176

Psalm 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.

Psalm 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.
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. Will you intercede for someone in need today?

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?

123:1f 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 unerring 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 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). The peace of Jerusalem is built and compact together: to the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord.

122:4 Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord.

122:3 Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together: the sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The sun shall not smite thee with heat, nor the moon by night.

122:2 The sun shall not smite thee with heat, nor the moon by night. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.

122:1 I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.

121:4 My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.

121:3 He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.

121:2 Ps 115:15; 124:8

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Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us: for we are exceedingly filled with contempt.

Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud.

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)

A Song of degrees of David

If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, now may Israel say; If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us:

Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us:

Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul:

Then the proud waters had gone over our soul.

Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth.

Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped.

Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

Theme: God is our Protector. The mountains around Jerusalem symbolize God’s protection for his people.

Author: Anonymous, though some suggest Hezekiah

A Song of degrees

They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.

As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even for ever.

For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous; lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity.

Do good, O Lord, unto them that are good, and to them that are upright in their hearts.

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.

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)

A Song of degrees

When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.

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.

The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.

Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the south.

He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

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.

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.

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.

God’s capacity for restoring life is beyond our under-
psalm 127

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

1 except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.
2 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.
3 lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.
4 as arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth.
5 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

1 blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways.
2 for thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.
3 thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table.
4 behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord.
5 the Lord shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life.

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

1 many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, may Israel now say:
2 many a time have they afflicted me from my youth: yet they have not prevailed against me.

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

127:1
Ps 78:69
127:2
Gen 3:17
Job 11:18-19
Eccl 5:12
127:3
Deut 28:4
128:1
Pss 121:1; 119:3
128:2
Eccl 8:12
128:3
Ps 52:8
128:5
Pss 122:9; 134:3
128:6
Gen 48:11
129:1
Exod 1:11
129:2
Jer 15:20
Matt 16:18
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 16:8). 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 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.

128:1f 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.
130 A Song of degrees

Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord.
2 Lord, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.
3 If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?
4 But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.
5 I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.
6 My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning.
7 Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.
8 And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

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

131 A Song of degrees of David

1 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.
2 Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child.
3 Let Israel hope in the Lord from henceforth and for ever.

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: David

132 A Song of degrees

1 Lord, remember David, and all his afflictions:
2 How he sware unto the Lord, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob;
3 That he would not go back on his word, nor remember iniquity for ever:
4 But would according to his great mercy, even as he sware unto David, and gave him the testimony of his oath:
5 And said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will.
6 For I know him, that he shall go on my ways, and do that which is pleasant unto me.

Theme: Trust and contentment. Quiet trust in God is the basis for our contentment.

Author: Anonymous


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
3 Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; 4 I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, 5 Until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob. 6 Lo, we heard of it at Ephratah: we found it in the fields of the wood. 7 We will go into his tabernacles: we will worship at his footstool. 8 Arise, O Lord, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength. 9 Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy. 10 For thy servant David’s sake turn not away the face of thine anointed. 11 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. 12 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. 13 For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. 14 This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it. 15 I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread. 16 I will also clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy. 17 There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed. 18 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

1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! 2 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; 3 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

1 Behold, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord, which by night stand in the house of the Lord.

132:4 Prov 6:4  
132:5 Acts 1:16  
132:6 Gen 35:19  
132:7 i Sam 7:1; 17:12  
132:8 1 Chr 28:2  
132:9 Ps 5:7; 96:5  
132:10 i/2 Chr 6:41-42  
132:11 Nums 10:35  
132:12 Ps 78:61  
132:13 Ps 149:5  
132:14 2 Sam 7:11-16  
132:15 Acts 2:30  
132:16 Luke 1:32  
132:17 Ps 18:58  
132:18 Matt 23:21  
132:19 Ps 107:9

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 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 and respect. Honor him by the quality of your work and the attitude of service you bring to it.
Psalm 135

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 1 Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the name of the Lord; praise him, O ye servants of the Lord.
2 Ye that stand in the house of the Lord: for his mercy endureth for ever.
3 Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the Lord.
4 The Lord that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion.

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.

Ps 136 1 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.

Ps 136:4–18 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.

Ps 136:11 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.
12 With a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm: for his mercy endureth for ever.

To him which divided the Red sea into parts: for his mercy endureth for ever.

And made Israel to pass through the midst of it: for his mercy endureth for ever.

But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea: for his mercy endureth for ever.

To him which led his people through the wilderness: for his mercy endureth for ever.

To him which smote great kings: for his mercy endureth for ever:

And made Israel to pass through the midst of it: for his mercy endureth for ever:

Even an heritage unto Israel his servant: for his mercy endureth for ever.

Who remembered us in our low estate: for his mercy endureth for ever:

And hath redeemed us from our enemies: for his mercy endureth for ever.

Who giveth food to all flesh: for his mercy endureth for ever:

O give thanks unto the God of heaven: for his mercy endureth for ever:

And hath redeemed us from our enemies: for his mercy endureth for ever.

Endureth for ever.

The 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

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 dare 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.
7 Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.
8 O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us.
9 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

1 I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.
2 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.
3 In the day when I cried thou answerest me, and strengthened me with strength in my soul.
4 All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O Lord, when they hear the words of thy mouth.
5 Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the Lord: for great is the glory of the Lord.
6 Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.
7 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.
8 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

1 O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me.
2 Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.
3 Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.
4 For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.
5 Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.
6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.
7 Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

Theme: God is omnipresent—he is present everywhere. 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 us.

Author: David

137:7 Pss 94:7-22
Ezek 25:12-14
Obad 1:1-14
137:8 Ps 131:1-22; 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
138:5 Pss 101:5; 113:4-7
Prov 3:4
Isa 4:6
138:7 Pss 20:8; 23:4; 71:20
138:8 Job 10:23
Pss 27:2; 73:9
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

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 5:19; Obadiah 1:1-21).

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.”

"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.

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.

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.

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.

God is omnipresent—he is present everywhere. Because this is so, you can never be lost to his Spirit. This is good news to
8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.
9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
10 Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.
11 If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.
12 Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.
13 For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb.
14 I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.
15 My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.
16 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.
17 How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!
18 If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.
19 Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God: depart from me therefore, ye bloody men.
20 For they speak against thee wickedly, and thou eniames take thy name in vain.
21 Do not I hate them, O Lorp, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?
22 I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.
23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:
24 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

1 Deliver me, O Lorp, from the evil man: preserve me from the violent man;
2 Which imagine mischiefs in their heart continually are they gathered together for war;
3 They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders’ poison is under their lips. Selah.
4 Keep me, O Lorp, from the hands of the wicked; preserve me from the violent man; who have purposed to overthrow my goings.
5 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.
6 I said unto the Lorp, Thou art my God: hear the voice of my supplications, O Lorp.
7 O Goo the Lord, the strength of my salvation, thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.
8 Grant not, O Lorp, 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.
139:16 imperfect: unformed.
139:20 take thy name in vain: misuse your name.
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.

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 us. 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).

139:22, 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.
1 LORD, I cry unto thee: make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee.

2 Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

3 Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.

4 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.

5 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.

6 When their judges are overthrown in stony places, they shall hear my words; for they are sweet.

7 Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth.

8 But mine eyes are unto thee, O LORD; in thee is my trust; leave not my soul destitute.

9 Keep me from the snares which they have laid for me, and the gins of the workers of iniquity.

10 Let the wicked fall into their own nets, whilst that I withal escape.

Theme: A prayer when overwhelmed and desperate. When we feel cornered by our enemies, only God can keep us safe.

Author: David

141 A Psalm of David

As for the head of those that compass me about, let the mischief of their own lips cover them.

Let burning coals fall upon them: let them be cast into the fire; into deep pits, that they rise not up again.

Let not an evil speaker be established in the earth: evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him.

I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor.

Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name: the upright shall dwell in thy presence.

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

142 Maschil of David; A Prayer when he was in the cave

I cried unto the LORD with my voice; with my voice unto the LORD did I make my supplication.

I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble.

140:9 Ps 7:16
140:10 Ps 11:19; 21:9
140:11 Ps 34:21
140:12 Pss 9:4; 35:10
140:13 Pss 16:11; 17:15; 97:12
141:1 Ps 70:5
141:2 Exod 29:41; 30:8
141:3 Ps 39:1
141:4 Prov 13:3; 21:23
141:5 Ps 110:36
141:6 Prov 23:6
141:7 Mal 3:15
141:8 Ps 23:5
141:10 Gal 6:1
141:11 Ps 11:5
141:12 Ps 11:1
141:13 Ps 91:3
141:14 Ps 35:8

141:1 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. 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.

142:1 make my supplication; plead for mercy.
142

3 When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knowest my path. In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me.
4 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.
5 I cried unto thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.
6 Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I.
7 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

1 Hear my prayer, O LORD, give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness.
2 And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.
3 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.
4 Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate.
5 I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands.
6 I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land. Selah.
7 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.
8 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.
9 Deliver me, O LORD, from mine enemies: I flee unto thee to hide me.
10 Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.
11 Quicken me, O LORD, for thy name’s sake: for thy righteousness’ sake bring my soul out of trouble.
12 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

1 Blessed be the LORD my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight:
2 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.

Theme: Rejoicing in God’s care. Whether in times of prosperity or adversity, happy are those whose God is the Lord.

Author: David
1 LORD, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him! or the son of man, that thou makest account of him?

2 Man is like to vanity: his days are as a shadow that passeth away.

3 Bow thy heavens, O Lord, and come down: touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.

4 Cast forth lightning, and scatter them: shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them.

5 Send thine hand from above; rid me, and deliver me out of great waters, from the hand of strange children;

6 Whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood.

7 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.

8 It is he that giveth salvation unto kings: who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword.

9 rid: rescue. strange children: foreigners.

10 Their children shall be as stones in the fields, and as unpolished stones: for they shall be taken out of the land as stubble.

11 The LORD riseth up to this intent, as in old time, for the cause of Jacob. For he looketh to the end of the earth, and seeth what is done upon it;

12 And saith, There is a generation to come, to which I will shew this, for what is prepared for the inhabitants of Jacob.

13 The works of the LORD are perfect: in all his doings is his truth. He is mighty to save; and great is his power and holiness.

14 His mercy is great to them that fear him; and his righteousness is to the children of the mighty.

15 Our son shall be as an olive plant among the plants of the field: he shall yield honey out of the trees of Jordan.

16 They shall build houses, and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.

17 They shall not build, and another dwell; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my days, so shall my generation have inAbram. He shall not die; neither shall he see corruption.

18 And as the days of a tree are the days of my days, so shall the generation of Abraham continue for evermore, and the tabernacle of my servants for ever.

19 We will not turn back from thy presence: give us life, and we will call upon thee continually.

20 Lord, let us bring forth the works of thine hand in thy days; in the generations of old.

21 Let the glory of the LORD endure for ever: let the Lord have mercy upon us for ever and ever. Amen.

22 The LORD shall be righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.

23 He is the fearer of the Lord, that feareth him. His children shall be mighty upon earth: and he that ruleth him shall not be moved.

24 The LORD is in his holy temple: the Lord is the one that speaketh; he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.

25 The LORD shall be the hope of his anointed; and his mighty servant, in whom shall they trust. And he shall make them mighty rulers over time, and shall exalt them for ever.

26 The Lord shall live for ever: and the heavens shall declare the glory of God. And all the power of the Lord shall be in the heavens.

27 Praise the Lord in the choir of the name of the Lord. Praise the God of Jacob in the assembly of holy ones. Praise him with the sound of the trumpet. Praise him with the psaltery and harp.

28 Praise him with the timbrel and dance. Praise him with stringed instruments and harps.

29 Praise him upon the loud cymbals. Praise him upon the harp.

30 Sound the trumpet at the new moon, in the time appointed, at the full moon.

31 With them that are in the habitations of asphalt, and of the wood and of the sycamore.

32 He that goeth forth and returneth thither shall not see the light of the sun.

33 He shall see darkness and utter gloom, as in times long vanished.

34 But the righteous shall live by his faith: he shall stand, and shall not be moved in the time of evil.

35 The Lord’s justice shall live for ever; and the thoughts of the wicked shall come to an end at the end.

36 The Lord shall come to judge the end of the earth: and he shall judge all the nations upon righteousness.

37 The Lord shall judge the end of the end, and they shall be judged according to their works.

38 The Lord shall reign for ever and ever. Selah.

39 The heavens are telltale unto God: and the earth crieth out unto him.

40 This is the cause which was before the Lord, that he should judge the earth. I will stand when my judge appeareth; for he is my mighty one and my righteousness.

41 He shall come down as a dragon, and as a snake that goeth out of the earth; like a serpent of the earth, he shall wound the horsemen of the daughters of Jerusalem, and he shall smite them with a rod of iron; and they shall be wounded with a great stroke of the rod.

42 For thou art not a God that hast pleasure in wickedness; neither shall evil dwell in thy tabernacle. Selah.

43 He shall destroy in the land of Zebal. He shall destroy the city of those that are confident in their heart, and of those that say, ‘What can they do to me?’

44 He shall destroy the house of those that are high; the place of their abode shall be cast down with stones; they shall go down to Egypt.

45 He shall break the house of the wicked, and the house of the sinner shall be rooted up.

46 The Lord shall reign for ever and ever. Selah.

47 The Lord shall give strength unto his people; the Lord shall bless his people with peace.
and appreciate God's character. (4) Praise lifts our perspective to corporate worship. (3) Praise causes us to consider the poor and afflicted in Luke 4:18–21; 7:21–23. He does not 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).

(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 shall 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).
147 1 Praise ye the Lord: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely.
2 The Lord doth build up Jerusalem: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.
3 He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.
4 He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names.
5 Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite.
6 The Lord lifteth up the meek; he casteth the wicked down to the ground.
7 Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God:
8 Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.
9 He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.
10 He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man.
11 The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.
12 Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Zion.
13 For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates; he hath blessed thy children within thee.
14 He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the wheat.
15 He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth: his word runneth very swiftly.
16 He giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes.
17 He setteth up clouds above his head; he establisheth his throne upon the waters.
18 He maketh his clouds smoke: his word maketh the great depths to boil.
19 He looketh upon the earth, and is pleased with mankind: and the inhabitants thereof are the beasts of his field.
20 He considereth the闪电照和霹雳, the lightning and the bright shining of the sun.
21 For he speaketh in his cloud: his word is fulfilled, which doth none of his words.
22 They shall all be ashamed of their idols: for there is one God; and there is none other.
23 They shall be destroyed: and they shall be afraid. Because of this your sin will be remembered, and your transgressions will pursue you.
24 When it is time, they shall be brought forth; they shall come to their own place. But I will rejoice in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.
25 When my heart is sad, I will say to the King: But you are my God.
26 My strength will be renewed: I will hope in the Lord. And I will praise him in the song of my joy.

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

148 1 Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord from the heavens: praise him in the heights.
2 Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts.
3 Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light.
4 Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens.
5 Let them praise the name of the Lord: for he commanded, and they were created.
6 He hath also established them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass.
7 Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps:
8 Fire, and hail; snow, and vapours; stormy wind fulfilling his word:
9 Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars:
10 Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl:
11 Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth:
12 Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children:
13 Praise him, all ye worships of God: praise him, all ye hosts of the Lord.
14 Praise him, O king of the kingdoms of the earth: praise him, for he is your God.
15 Because of the Lord's mercy and his loving-kindness, because of the truth of the Lord, and the compassions of the Lord:
16 Which doth according to his word; which hath stretched out the heavens, and founded the earth, and said unto them, Ye shall be: and they were.

Theme: Let all creation praise and worship the Lord.

Author: Anonymous

147:1: Pss 33:1; 135:3
147:2: Isa 41:12; 55:11
147:3: Ezek 39:28
147:4: Gen 15:5
147:5: Ps 98:1
147:6: Isa 40:26
147:7: Ps 104:10
147:8: Job 5:10; 26:8; 38:26
147:9: Ps 104:41
147:10: Ps 104:27
147:11: Ps 33:17
147:12: Ps 74:13; 60:17-18
147:13: Ps 68:17
147:14: Deut 32:14
147:15: Ps 104:3
147:16: Ps 104:14
147:17: Deut 33:3-4
147:18: Mal 4:4
147:19: Deut 4:7-8
147:20: Ps 79:6
148:1: Ps 102:19
148:2: Ps 103:20-21
148:3: Ps 97:12
148:4: Deut 10:14
148:5: Ps 99:2
148:6: Job 18:33
148:7: Ps 97:12
148:8: Ps 96:11
148:9: Hab 3:10

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.

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.

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.
13 Let them praise the name of the L ORD: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven.
14 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 L ORD.

**Theme:** A victory celebration. We have the assurance that God truly enjoys his people.

**Author:** Anonymous

149:1 Praise ye the L ORD. Sing unto the L ORD a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints.
149:2 Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.
149:3 Let them praise his name in the dance: let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp.

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**WHERE TO GET HELP IN THE BOOK OF PSALMS**

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149:1–3 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.
For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation.

Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds.

Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand;

To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people;

To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron;

To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the Lord.

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

Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power.

Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness.

Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp.

Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs.

Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals.

Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.

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).

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).

How could the message be more clear? The author 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! 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.


Ps 35:27
Job 35:10
Ps 66:17
 Nah 3:10
Ps 148:14
Ezek 28:26
Ps 149:3; 73:17; 102:19
Ps 98:6
Ps 139:20
1 Chr 13:8; 15:16
Ps 145:21
Ps 146:1
Ps 73:17
JOHN

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.
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.


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.

MEGATHEMES

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<tr>
<th>THEME</th>
<th>EXPLANATION</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jesus Christ, Son of God</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eternal Life</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belief</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holy Spirit</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resurrection</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
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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.
2 The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything that was made.
3 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.
4 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.
5 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.
6 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.
7 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.
8 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.
9 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.
10 He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 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:
11 which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
12 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.
13 John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I speak, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.

1:1ff How 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.

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1:1 What is John trying to say? John is trying to make the point that Jesus is not a mere human being but is the Word of God, the living picture of God’s holiness, the one by whom “all things consist.”

1:2 What is John doing? John is introducing Jesus as the Word of God, the Creator of all things, and the one through whom all things were made.

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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.
And of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

John the Baptist declares his mission (19)

And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not: he it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

John the Baptist proclaims Jesus as the Messiah (20)

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me, and he was before me. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.


1:28 Bethabara beyond: Bethany on the other side of the. 1:31 made manifest: revealed.

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 15:1-6; 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 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.

1:28 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.
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 confrontor
- 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
- 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.
The first disciples follow Jesus (21)

35 Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples, 36 and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! 37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

38 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?

39 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.

40 One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. 41 He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

42 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.

43 The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. 44 Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

45 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.

46 And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

48 Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me?

1:35 stood, and was standing with. 1:38 Master: Teacher. dearest thou: are you staying. 1:39 abide, stayed. 1:40, Jona; or, John. 1:43 would: decided to. 1:44 no guile: nothing false. 1:48 whence knowest thou: how do you know.

1:35ff These new disciples used several names for Jesus: Lamb of God (1:36), Rabbi (1:38), Messias (1:41), Son of God (1:49), King of Israel (1:49). As they got to know Jesus, their appreciation for Christ came with living by faith. We may find that words of faith come easily, but deep appreciation for Christ comes with living by faith. We may be drawn to him for his teaching, but we will come to know Christ, the more we understand and appreciate who he is. As they got to know Jesus, their appreciation for Christ came with living by faith. When the two disciples began to follow Jesus, he asked them, "What seek ye?" Following Jesus 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?

1:38 When the two disciples began to follow Jesus, he asked them, "What seek ye?" Following Jesus 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 him. Are we seeking his glory or ours? His 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?

1:42 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 28, 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.

1:47 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 uncomfortable 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.

Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.

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. 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.

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)

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.

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.

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.
4 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.
5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatever he saith unto you, do it.
6 And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. 7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. 8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it.

9 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, 10 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.

11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

3 After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days.

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)

23 And the Jews’ passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

2 And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

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.

2:11 manifested forth: revealed. 2:12 continued: stayed.

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 21:12–17; Mark 11:12–19; Luke 19:45–48).

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 was 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.

2:14f 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.
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; 16 and said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. 20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? 21 But he spake of the temple of his body. 22 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.

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. 24 But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, 25 and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

Nicodemus visits Jesus at night (24)

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: 2 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.

2:15 scourge: whip. 2:16 hence: away. house of merchandise: market. 2:17 ate 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!

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.

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 over injustice and sin; it is wrong to be angry over trivial personal offenses.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.
Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 5 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? 6 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 7 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 8 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 9 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. 10 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? 11 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. 12 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 13 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 14 As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16 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. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.
John the Baptist tells more about Jesus (25)

22 After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized. 23 And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. 24 For John was not yet cast into prison. 25 Then there arose a question between some of John’s disciples and the Jews about purifying. 26 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.

27 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. 28 Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. 29 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. 30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

31 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. 32 And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. 33 He that hath received his testimony hath made manifest: clearly seen. 34 Wrought in: done through. 35 Received: exposed. 36 Doeth truth: does what is true. 37 Made manifest: clearly seen. 38 Wrought in: done through.

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.

3:17 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.
set to his seal that God is true. 34 For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. 35 The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. 36 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, (though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) 2 he left Judea, and departed again into Galilee.

4 And he must needs go through Samaria. 3 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. 6 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. 7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. 8 (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.)

9 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.

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knowest 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.

11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: whence then hast thou that living water? 12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: 14 but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

15 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.
1:19 The woman answered and said, I have no husband: for thou hast said five husbands: and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saist thou truly.

1:20 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

1:21 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

1:22 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

1:23 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

1:24 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

1:25 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.

1:26 The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

1:27 Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

Jesus tells about the spiritual harvest (28)

2:1 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?

2:2 The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,

2:3 Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

2:4 So that the city was trimmed together out of that which she said, and they came together unto him.

2:5 Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

2:6 The disciples then left that place and went to Capernaum, seeking him.

2:7 And they found him in the house. Jesus saith unto them, Whom seek ye?

2:8 They say unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, Master,) where is he?

2:9 Jesus saith unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye seek me, not because ye saw the signs, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

2:10 For that which the loaves is not, except ye eat the meat of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have nothing to do with the Son of man.

2:11 And they said unto him, Art thou now come out of Judea unto Galilee, to teach us? For it was known unto us that thine teaching cometh from Galilee.

2:12 He answered and said unto them, Have any at hand, and lo, I say unto you, lift up your eyes, and see the heaven, and the things that are in it.

2:13 For there is neither honour among the Jews, nor among the Gentiles, but God is judge of the righteousness which is done by men, whether it be in a right way or a crooked.

2:14 Jesus therefore gave them also this parable; Can there be any thing greater than he that hath the power to lay down life, and to take it again? But what is that greater than to lay down life, and to take it again?

2:15 The woman answered and said, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

2:16 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

2:17 The woman answered and said, I have no husband: for thou hast said five husbands: and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saist thou truly.

2:18 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

2:19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

2:20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

2:21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

2:22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

2:23 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.

2:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.

2:25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.

Jesus returns to Galilee

Jesus returned to Galilee. He 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. 36 And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. 37 And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. 38 I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.

Many Samaritans believe in Jesus (29)
39 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. 40 So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. 41 And many more believed because of his own word; 42 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.

Jesus preaches in Galilee (30)/Matthew 4:12–17; Mark 1:14, 15; Luke 4:14, 15)
43 Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee. 44 For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country. 45 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.

Jesus heals a government official’s son (31)
46 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. 47 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. 48 Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. 49 The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die. 50 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. 51 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. 52 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 son was healed at that selfsame hour.

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 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.

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 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.

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.
whole house. 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)

After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. 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. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. 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?

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. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath. The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.

5:3, 4 After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. (1) the Feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread, (2) the Feast of Pentecost (also called Weeks), and (3) the Feast of Tabernacles.

5:6 After 38 years, this man’s problem had become a way of life. He 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?
11 He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. 
12 Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? 
13 And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place. 
14 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. 
15 The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole.

Jesus claims to be God's Son (43)

16 And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day. 
17 But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. 
18 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. 
19 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. 
20 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. 
21 For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. 
22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: 
23 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. 
24 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.

5:13 wist: knew. conveyed himself: slipped. 5:14 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.

5:14 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.

5:19 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.

5:24 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 Deutoronomy 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.
Jesus supports his claim (44)  
31 If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. 32 There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. 33 Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. 34 But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. 35 He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

36 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. 37 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. 38 And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. 39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. 40 And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

41 I receive not honour from men. 42 But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. 43 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. 44 How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?

45 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. 46 For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. 47 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

After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias. 2 And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased. 3 And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. 4 And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.

5 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? 6 Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that these might eat. 7 This he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.

8 Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.

9 One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, 9 There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?

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. 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.

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. 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** (Matthew 14:22–33; Mark 6:45–52)

And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea, and entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them. And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. 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. But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid.

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** (Matthew 14:23; Mark 6:51–53; John 6:54–58)

The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that Jesus walked not with his disciples into the boat, but that Jesus was not come to them. And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?

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. Labour not for the

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 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.

6:19, 20 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.
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.

Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

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. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

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.

But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.

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.

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

The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. 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?

Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.

And Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, 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.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

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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.

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bread of life. 49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. 51 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. 52 The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

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. 54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. 58 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. 59 These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

Many disciples desert Jesus (101)

Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? 61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Dost this offend you? 62 What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? 63 It is the spirit that quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. 64 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. 65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. 66 From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. 67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? 68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. 69 And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. 70 Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? 71 He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.

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).

6:53, 55 The Holy Spirit gives spiritual life (“quickens”); 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.

6:68, 69 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.
2. Jesus encounters conflict with the religious leaders

Jesus' brothers ridicule him (121)

Matthew 12:46

Jesus came with the greatest gift ever offered, so why did his brethren believe no 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.

7:13 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.

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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.

7:17 The Feast of Tabernacles is described in Leviticus 23:33ff. 7:2 The Feast of Tabernacles is described in Leviticus 23:33ff. 7:1 After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him. 2 Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand. 3 His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judæa, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest. 4 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. 5 For neither did his brethren believe in him. 6 Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready. 7 The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. 8 Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast: for my time is not yet full come. 9 When he had said these words unto them, he abode still in Galilee.

7:11 John 11:56
7:12 John 7:40–43
7:13 John 9:22–23
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

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.

Jesus teaches openly at the Temple (123)

John 9:22–23

Jesus' brothers had a difficult time believing in him. Some rated the days when the Israelites wandered in the wilderness and died and rose again, they finally believed. We today have every advantage of their freedom. 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.

The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee? 16 Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. 17 If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. 18 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. 19 Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me? 20 The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee? 21 Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel. 22 Moses said, A prophet shall not be without honour, except in his own country, and in his own house. 23 Neither did their parents nor their brethren marvel at the words of the prophets: for they perceived them that spoke by inspiration of God. 24 But unto the people that did not believe him, Jesus said, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and in his own house. 25 And everywhere they marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? 26 Jesus answered, Neither hath any man that ever learned letters, taught him. 27 He is not from hence, nor hath any man taught him: as he saith, None of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me? 28 The people answered, We be not slain; but he saith, That he is the Son of God. 29 The Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? 30 Jesus answered and said unto them, Neither hath any man taught me: but I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is the Son of God. 31 But some of them would have taken him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come. 32 But of the truth I speak: every man that loveth his own soul shall keep himself from me. 33 And he said, I have not sought mine own glory; there is One that seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world. 34 For neither did his brethren believe in him. 35 Then said Jesus unto them again, The prophetic office, not the sacerdotal, was characteristic of the new dispensation. John 7:49 indicates that the prophet's office was never granted to the Jews. Jesus said that his time had not yet come. 36 The Jews again took up stones to stone him. 37 Jesus answered and said unto them, Many good works have I shewed you from the Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? 38 The Jews answered and said unto him, We stone thee not for a good work, but for blasphemy; because thou, being a man, makest thyself God. 39 Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? 40 If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; 41 Sayest thou of him, whom the father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest? 42 Who can bear witness unto me? No one: but he hath borne witness of me. 43 Have not ye read in the law, that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are guiltless? 44 But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple. 45 But if ye had known what things ye could do by the Son of man, ye would not have slain the Son of man. 46 Then said they unto him, Say we not right? 47 Moreover the Jews said, He abused God's Son; and, He said unto them, I have a greater than the temple.
John 7

The 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.

There was a popular tradition that the Messiah would come of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was (7:42). There was a popular tradition that the Messiah would come of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was (7:42). So there was a division among the people because of him. And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him. Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, What have ye not brought him?

Religious leaders attempt to arrest Jesus (124)

32 The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him. Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: but where I am, thither ye cannot come.

35 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?

36 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?

37 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. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. 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.

42 Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? So there was a division among the people because of him. And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him. Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him?

7:23 John 5:8-10, 16 Acts 7:18
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
7:33 John 13:33; 16:5, 10, 16,18
7:34 John 8:21; 13:33
7:36 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 2:1 John 7:52
7:43 John 9:16, 10:19

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 promoting 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.
The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.

Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also persuaded? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed. Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,) Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth? They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet. And every man went unto his own house.

Jesus forgives an adulterous woman (125)

Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. 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. And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, they say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? 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. 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. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. 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. 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? 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)

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.

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 who alone had the truth, and they resisted the truth about Christ.

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.
The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.

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. 15Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. 16And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. 17It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. 18I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me. 19Then 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. 20These 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)

21Then 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. 22Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come. 23And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. 24I 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. 25Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning. 26I 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. 27They understood not that he spake to them of the Father. 28Then 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 those things. 29And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him. 30As he spake these words, many believed on him.

Jesus speaks about God’s true children (128)

31Then 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. 32They answered him, We be Abraham’s seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? 33Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. 34And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. 35If the Son therefore make you free, ye shall be free indeed. 36I know that ye are Abraham’s seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. 37I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.

38They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. 39But if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also. For they considered him who sent him to be just an old man, therefore they did not believe him. 40Jesus said to them, Before Abraham was, I was. 41Then they said to him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what willest thou to shew us for a sign? 42So Jesus spake again, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. 43Then saith he unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.
Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. 
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. 
Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. 
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. 
Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. 
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. 
And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.

John 8:41-59

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. 
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. 
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). 
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? 

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. 

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. 

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? 

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)

And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. 2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? 3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. 4 For the works of God are manifested in him.

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, 5 and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam. (which is by interpretation, Sent.) 6 He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

The neighbours therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? 8 Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him. But he said, I am he.

Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened? 10 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.

Then said they unto him, Where is he? He said, I know not.

Religious leaders question the blind man (149)

They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. 14 And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. 15 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 I saw.

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.

They say unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes? He said, He is a prophet.

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. 19 And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see?

His parents answered them and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: 21 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. 22 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.

9:10 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.

9:13–17 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...
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?
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.
30 The man answered and said unto them, Why is it that you do not understand that God gives the ungodly light? he is just, because he is pure, and has laid aside all sin.
31 And he said, The works of God are plain, and have revealed themselves to them, but they have not seen, and have not known what they were.
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.

Jesus teaches about spiritual blindness (150)

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?
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.
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.
40 And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also?
41 Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye see. 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 pasture.

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 (stupidity and self-satisfaction) 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. 10 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.

11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. 12 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. 13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. 15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 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. 17 Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. 18 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.

19 There was a division therefore again among the Jews for these sayings. 20 And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him? 21 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)**

22 And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. 23 And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon’s porch. 24 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.

25 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. 26 But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. 27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28 and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. 30 I and my Father are one.


**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.
Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?

33 The Jews answered him, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; 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? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. 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.

Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand, and went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode.

39 And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true. And many believed on him there.

3. Jesus encounters crucial events in Jerusalem

Lazarus becomes ill and dies (165)

11 Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) 3 Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

Reference Name Significance
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6:27 Son of Man J esus’ 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 J esus is the only way into God’s Kingdom.
10:11 Good Shepherd J esus 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 J esus 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.

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.
4 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. 5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. 6 When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was. 7 Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again.

8 His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?

9 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. 10 But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him. 11 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.

12 Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. 13 Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.

14 Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. 15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.

16 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)

27 When then Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already. 28 Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off; 29 and many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. 30 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. 31 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. 32 But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.

33 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

34 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

35 Jesus saith unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: 36 and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. 37 Believest thou this?

11:4 thereby through it. 11:6 abode: stayed. 11:8 Master: Rabbi. of late: a short time ago. 11:10 howbeit: however. 11:15 of the intent that. 11:17 lain: in the grave. been: in the tomb. 11:18 nigh: near to. fifteen furlongs: two miles. 11:20 sat: still in the house: stayed at home. 11:21 had: not would not have.
27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world. 28 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. 29 As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him.

30 Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. 31 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. 32 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. 33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, 34 and said, Where have ye laid him? 35 When Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. 36 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!

11:27 which should: who was to. 11:28 Master is come: Teacher is here. 11:33 groaned in the spirit: was deeply moved.
Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead (167)

38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. 39 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.

40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God? 41 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. 42 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. 43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. 44 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.

Religious leaders plot to kill Jesus (168)

45 Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him. 46 But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done. 47 Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. 48 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.

49 And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, 50 nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

51 And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; 52 and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

53 Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death. 54 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.

55 And the Jews’ passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem to purify themselves.

56 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?

57 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.

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 “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.
A woman anoints Jesus with expensive perfume

Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. Then they made him a supper; and Martha served; but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. 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.

Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him,

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 lifestyles 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).


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.

On the next day many people who were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, 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. And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt. 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.

The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record. For this cause the people also met him, for that they knew that he had done these miracles. 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).

And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: the same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip told Jesus.

And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

Judah 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.

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 his burial. This act and Jesus’ response to it do not teach us to ignore the poor so we can spend money extravagantly for Christ. This act and Jesus’ response to it do not teach us to ignore the poor so we can spend money extravagantly for Christ.

Sunday we celebrate Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem as Lord of lords and King of peace. The people who were praising God for giving them a king were leaving. When it became apparent that Jesus was not going to fulfill their hopes, many people turned against him. 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.
Father and bring glory to him. Although we will never have to face
he knew that God sent him into the world to die for our sins, in
his Father. He wanted to be delivered from this horrible death, but
human he dreaded it. He knew he would have to take the sins of
Jesus knew his crucifixion lay ahead and because he was

12:27
Ps 6:3
Matt 16:38
Mark 14:34

Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. 29 The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: this he said, signifying what death he should die.

30 Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. 31 Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. 32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. 33 This he said, signifying what death he should die.

34 The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever:

12:27
What Jesus did
Jesus also forgave his sins. They found the Savior.
Jesus restored her son to life. J esus 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.

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 J esus.
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 J esus, their Master.
The religious leaders wanted J esus killed and got their wish.

12:34
References
Mark 2:1–12
Luke 5:1–11
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.
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. 36 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.

Most of the people do not believe in Jesus (186)
37 But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him:
38 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? 39 Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, 40 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. 41 These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him. 42 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: 43 for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

Jesus summarizes his message (187)
44 Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. 45 And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me. 46 I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. 47 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.


1 John 8:12; 9:4; 12:36
1 John 8:59
1 Thes 5:5
Isa 53:1
Rom 10:16
Isa 6:10
Matt 13:14
Isa 5:1
1 John 7:13, 48; 9:22-23; 12:11
1 John 5:44

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). 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.
13:11 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?

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 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. 2 And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray him; 3 Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; 4 he...
riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. 5 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.

6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? 7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast not part with me.

9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. 10 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. 11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. 12 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? 13 Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so am I. 14 If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. 15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. 16 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. 17 If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

18 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. 19 Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he. 20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

J esus and the disciples have the Last Supper

(21/ Matthew 26:20–29; Mark 14:17–26; Luke 22:14–30)

21 When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that of you shall betray me.

22 Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. 23 Now there was leaning on Jesus’ bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. 24 Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. 25 He then lying on Jesus’ breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?

26 Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. 27 And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. 28 And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou dost, do quickly. 29 Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. 30 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. 31 He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.

13:31-32
John 12:23; 17:1, 5
13:33
John 7:33-34; 8:21
13:34
Luke 19:18
Eph 5:2
1 Thess 4:9
1 Pet 1:22
1 John 2:8, 3:23;
4:10-11
13:35
1 John 3:14:4:20
13:36-38
Mark 14:29-31
Luke 22:33-34
13:36
John 21:18
2 Pet 1:14
14:2
Ps 50:1
John 2:16, 19-21;
14:6
14:3
John 14:10-11,
18:20; 16:16-22;
17:21-24
14:6-8
John 1:4, 14, 16;
8:32; 10:10; 11:25
Rom 5:2
Eph 2:18
Heb 10:20
1 John 5:20
14:7
John 6:66; 8:19
1 John 2:13
14:9
John 1:14, 18;
12:45
2 Cor 4:4
Col 1:35
Heb 1:3

Jesus predicts Peter's denial (212/Luke 22:31–38)

13:31 Therefore, when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. 13:32 If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him. 13:33 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. 13:34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 13:35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

14:1 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.

14:2 Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.


14:5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?

14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. 14:7 If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

14:8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

14:9 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? 14:10 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.

14:11 And I will shew him unto you. 14:12 Jesus saith unto him, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? 14:13 He answered and said, Lord, is it to me?

14:14 Jesus answered and said unto him, If I henceforth tell you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, when I tell you of heavenly things?

14:15 No man seeketh to know about that which is in heaven, but he that cometh from heaven shall tell us of things that are in heaven.

14:16 And he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? 14:17 What one is there of you that will show me Father? 14:18 If I say unto you, I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may remain with you for ever;

14:19 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.

14:20 And it shall be, that in the day that ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

14:21 Except the Father give you the things, ye cannot hear the teachings of God.

14:22 And there is more hereafter which I would show you, but ye cannot bear it now.

14:23 However, now I tell you of it before it comes, that when it comes, ye may believe that I am. 14:24 No man cometh to the Father, but by me.

14:25 Jesus saith unto him, If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, when I tell you of heavenly things?

14:26 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

14:27 As my Father hath loved me, even so have I loved you: believe this.

14:28 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.

14:29 These things have I spoken in the world, that my disciples should be comforted. 14:30 Upon this mountain, and upon Jerusalem, shall yet be heard, The voice of the Assur, saying, Hew thee a place, prepare the way for the Assur’s coming. 14:31 And the Assur shall come forth to war, and shall fell all the trees of the field. 14:32 Straightway: at once.

14:33 One to another; for one another.

14:34 Whither thou goest; where are you going.

14:35 Mansions: rooms.

14:36 Receive: take.

14:37 Whither: where.

14:38 Sufficient: will satisfy.

14:39 So such as...
Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he also do; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

Jesus promises the Holy Spirit

If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 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. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he 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.

Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man loveth me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. 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. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. 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.

When Jesus says, “I will come to you,” he meant it. He 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.

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).

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 (25:22), 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.

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.

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; 15:28); he convicts 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.
27 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. 28 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. 29And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.

30 Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. 31 But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandments, even so do I. 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. 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. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. 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.

1 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. 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. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. 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. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and your joy might be full.

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.

15:11 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 5:22–23 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 hard-
you, and that your joy might be full. 12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. 13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. 14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. 15 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. 16 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. 17 These things I command you, that ye love one another.

Jesus warns about the world’s hatred (216)
18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. 19 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. 20 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. 21 But all these things will they do unto you for my name’s sake, because they know not him that sent me. 22 If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin. 23 He that hateth me hateth my Father also. 24 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. 25 But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause. 26 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: 27 and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

Jesus teaches about the Holy Spirit (217)
5 But now I go my way to him that sent me, and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? 6 But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. 7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. 8 And when he is come, he will convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 of sin, because they believe not in me; 10 of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; 11 of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. 12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Yet I have told you this before, that when the time should come, ye might believe. 14 These things I spake unto you, when I was with you, that ye might have peace, while I was with you. 15 But now I go my way: and ye shall seek me, and shall find me, or where I am, thither shall ye go. 16 A little while, and ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and when ye shall find me, ye shall know me, and shall understand. 17 But the Comforter, 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. 18 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. 19 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. 20 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. 21 But all these things will they do unto you for my name’s sake, because they know not him that sent me. 22 If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin. 23 He that hateth me hateth my Father also. 24 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. 25 But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause. 26 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: 27 and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

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will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. 5And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 6of sin, because they believe not on me; 7of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; 8of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. 

12I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13Howbeit 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. 

14He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. 15All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you. 

16A 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)

17Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while? we cannot stay here. 

18Now when 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? 19Verily, 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. 

20A 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. 

21And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. 

22And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatever ye shall ask in my name, he will give it to you. 

23Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. 

24These 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. 

25These things I have spoken unto you, that my joy might be in you, and your joy might be full. 

26The 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. 

27What 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!

28Jesus was referring to his death, now only a few hours away, and his resurrection three days later. 

29What 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.

30Keep your eye on the future and on God’s promises!
Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? 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. These things have I 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)**

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: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. 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)**

I have manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. 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. I pray for them: I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. 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. 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.

And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. 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. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.
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 Caiphas's house for his first of many trials.
unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest.

Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way; 9 that the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.

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. 11 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?

Annas questions Jesus (225)

Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him, and led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year. 10 Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

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. But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the damsel that kept the door, and brought in Peter. 17 Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples?

He saith, I am not.

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.

And the high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. 20 Jesus answered him, I speak 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. 21 Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.

Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?

And they answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. 5 As soon as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground.

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22 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?

23 Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?

24 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)

25 And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples?

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 26:66). 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.

18:26-27 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.

26 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? 27 Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew.

Jesus stands trial before Pilate (230/Mark 15:2-5; Luke 23:1-5)

28 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. 29 Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man?

30 They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.

31 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: 32 that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.

33 Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?

34 Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?

35 Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?

36 Jesus answered him, 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.

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: that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die.

When Pilate again entered the hall of judgment, he called Jesus and said, Art thou the King of the Jews? Jesus replied, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? Pilate then asked, Am I a Jew? The chief priests had delivered him to Pilate. 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.

By Jewish law, entering the house of a Gentile would cause a Jewish person to be ceremonially defiled. As a result, this man 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.

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.

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.

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.

This prediction is recorded in Matthew 20:19. Crucifixion was a common method of execution for criminals who were not Roman citizens.

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.

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.
When there is no standard or acknowledgement of truth, there is no basis for moral right and wrongdoing. Justice becomes whatever works or helps those in power.

To many government officials, truth was whatever the majority thought it was. To them, Pilate was cynical; he thought all truth was relative.

18:38 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.

19:9 Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe; and they smote him with their hands.

19:12 Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring forth to you, the man whose authority I have condemned, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. 3 Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!

19:18 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; 4 and went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. 5 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?

19:19 Jesus answered, Thou couldest 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.

19:20 Then Pilate therefore said unto the Jews, Behold, I bring forth to you the man whose authority I have condemned, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. 2 Then Pilate said unto the Jews, Behold, I bring forth to you the man whose authority I have condemned, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. 3 Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him: had him whipped.

19:21 Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him, and said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands.

19:22 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; 3 and went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. 4 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?

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19:28 Pilate therefore said unto the Jews, Behold, I bring forth to you the man whose authority I have condemned, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. 2 Then Pilate said unto the Jews, Behold, I bring forth to you the man whose authority I have condemned, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. 3 Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him: had him whipped.

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19:30 Pilate therefore said unto the Jews, Behold, I bring forth to you the man whose authority I have condemned, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. 2 Then Pilate said unto the Jews, Behold, I bring forth to you the man whose authority I have condemned, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. 3 Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him: had him whipped.

19:31 Pilate therefore said unto the Jews, Behold, I bring forth to you the man whose authority I have condemned, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. 2 Then Pilate said unto the Jews, Behold, I bring forth to you the man whose authority I have condemned, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. 3 Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him: had him whipped.

19:32 Pilate therefore said unto the Jews, Behold, I bring forth to you the man whose authority I have condemned, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. 2 Then Pilate said unto the Jews, Behold, I bring forth to you the man whose authority I have condemned, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. 3 Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him: had him whipped.

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19:37 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


38 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. 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?

40 Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.
12 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.
13 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. 14 And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!
15 They answered him, We have a king of our own, even Jesus the Nazarene.
16 Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.
17 Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away to be crucified.

**John 19 1586**

Jesus is led away to be crucified


And they took Jesus, and led him away to be crucified.

Jesus is placed on the cross


Where they crucified him, and two others with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. 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.

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.

Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.

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. 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.

19:15 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).

19:19 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—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. 

19:26—27 Jesus asked his close friend John, the writer of this Gospel, to care for his mother, Mary. His instructions were simple and clear: “Woman, behold thy son!” Then he said, “Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.” When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

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.

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 changed 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).
31 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. 32 Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. 33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: 34 but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. 35 And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. 36 For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. 37 And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

Jesus is laid in the tomb (237) Matthew 27:57-61; Mark 15:42-47; Luke 23:50-56

38 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. 39 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. 40 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. 41 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. 42 There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews’ preparation day, for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

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. 2 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.


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 (20:8). (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).
John 20

20:3 Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. 4 So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

5 And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

6 Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.

7 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

8 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

20:9 He lying there; 20:7 napkin: cloth; 20:9 knew not: did not understand.

Thomas’s story is told in the Gospels. He is also mentioned in Acts 1:13.

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.

20:8, 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 graverobber 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)

11But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre. 12And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. 13And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou?

She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

14And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. 15Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?

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.

16Jesus saith unto her, Mary.

She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabbi; which is to say, Master.

17Jesus 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.

18Mary Magdalene went 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)

19Then 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. 20And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. 21Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. 22And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: 23Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

Jesus appears to the disciples including Thomas (245/Mark 16:14)

24But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. 25The 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 his hands and his side, I will not believe.

26Jesus said, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. 27And whosoever shall believe on him shall not be ashamed.

Jesus appears to the disciples (246/John 20:1–21)

21After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias: and on this wise appeared he. 22There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples. 23Simon Peter said unto them, Come and see. But they believed not on him. 24Then said Jesus, Abide ye here, I go unto the Father: and if ye love me, keep my commandments. 25And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever— the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him. But ye know him; for he abideth with you. 26And I will manifest him unto you. 27After this I told Thomas, Let us go unto him again, and see him. 28Thomas also, which was called the Twin, saith unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him. 29Then said Jesus unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. 30And because ye have seen me, ye believe: blessed are they that believe without seeing me. 31And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake aforetime, that I do many things which ye believe not: for the works which I do bear witness of me that I am. 32And the words that I spake unto you, they abideth in you, and the Holy Ghost shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. 33Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. 34Whosoever receiveth you, receiveth me; and whosoever receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me. 35Now is mine hour to be glorified in the Father: and God is glorified in me. 36And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. 37He that believeth on me, as the scripture saith, out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water. 38But this spake he of the Spirit, whom they which believe on him should receive: for the Spirit is given unto you. 39And now are we come to parting. 40I have said these things to you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but ye shall be of comfort. 41In 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. 42And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again to take you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. 43And whosoever shall love me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. 44Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, thou livest for ever; and, art thou come again to take us unto thyself? 45Jesus answered, Are not all things delivered unto me of my Father? and how is it that ye do not believe? 46But the hour cometh, and now is come, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in the spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 47God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth. 48Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is come, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 49God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth. 50For neither is this worship service with meat and drink, as though I had said, Ye have given me meat and drink to eat. 51For my flesh is meat indeed unto the world; and my blood is drink indeed unto the world. 52He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. 53For my flesh is meat indeed to the world. 54And if ye shall eat my flesh, and drink my blood, ye have eternal life; and I will raise you up at the last day. 55For my flesh is meat indeed to the world. 56And if ye shall eat my flesh, and drink my blood, ye have eternal life; and I will raise you up at the last day.
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. 27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it if into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: 24 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)

After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself. 2 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.

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.

But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. 3 Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat?

Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? 20:26 Within: inside. 20:27 Reach: stretch. 20:28 Children: “Children” or “lads” was an affectionate greeting, not a term of condescension.
Jesus talks with Peter (247)

So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, loveth thou me more than these?

He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee.

He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, loveth thou me?

He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee.

He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, loveth thou me?

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.

Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst 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.

This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

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? 21:17

Peter seeing that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.

As soon as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also

They answered him, No.

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.

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.

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.

As soon as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. 11 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.

Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. 13 Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. 14 This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

In this beach scene, Jesus led Peter through an experience that would remove the cloud of his denial. 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.

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, philo (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 philo. 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?

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.

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.”
22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. 23 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? 24 This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true. 25 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.


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.

<table>
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<th>Messianic Prophecies</th>
<th>Old Testament Prophecies</th>
<th>New Testament Fulfillment</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem</td>
<td>Micah 5:2</td>
<td>Matthew 2:1–6</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Messiah was to be born of a virgin</td>
<td>Isaiah 7:14</td>
<td>Matthew 1:18–25</td>
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<td>3. Messiah was to be a prophet like Moses</td>
<td>Deuteronomy 18:15, 18, 19</td>
<td>John 7:40</td>
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<td>4. Messiah was to enter Jerusalem in triumph</td>
<td>Zechariah 9:9</td>
<td>Matthew 21:1–9</td>
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<td>5. Messiah was to be rejected by his own people</td>
<td>Isaiah 53:1, 3</td>
<td>John 12:12–16</td>
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<td>6. Messiah was to be betrayed by one of his followers</td>
<td>Psalm 118:22</td>
<td>Matthew 26:14–16, 47–50</td>
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<td>7. Messiah was to be tried and condemned</td>
<td>Psalm 41:9</td>
<td>Luke 22:19–23</td>
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<td>8. Messiah was to be silent before his accusers</td>
<td>Isaiah 53:8</td>
<td>Matthew 27:1. 2</td>
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<td>9. Messiah was to be struck and spat on by his enemies</td>
<td>Isaiah 53:7</td>
<td>Luke 23:1–25</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Messiah was to be mocked and insulted</td>
<td>Psalm 22:7, 8</td>
<td>Matthew 27:12–14</td>
</tr>
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<td>11. Messiah was to die by crucifixion</td>
<td>Psalm 22:14, 16, 17</td>
<td>Mark 15:3, 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Messiah was to suffer with criminals and pray for his enemies</td>
<td>Psalm 22:21</td>
<td>Luke 23:8–10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Messiah was to be given vinegar</td>
<td>Matthew 26:67; 27:30</td>
<td>Acts 4:1–12</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Messiah’s bones were not to be broken</td>
<td>Matthew 27:34</td>
<td>Matthew 27:35</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Messiah was to die as a sacrifice for sin</td>
<td>Psalm 22:18</td>
<td>Matthew 27:36</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Messiah was to be raised from the dead</td>
<td>Psalm 22:19</td>
<td>John 19:28–30</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Messiah is now at God’s right hand</td>
<td>Psalm 69:21</td>
<td>Matthew 16:19</td>
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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 (15:23–26). 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.
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.

MEGA THEMES

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<tr>
<th>THEME</th>
<th>EXPLANATION</th>
<th>IMPORTANCE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sin</td>
<td>Sin means refusing to do God’s will and failing to do all that God wants. 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.</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sovereignty</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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,

2 (which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) 3 concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 4 and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: 5 by whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name: 6 among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ: 7 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

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. 9 For it is God’s 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; 10 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 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, (2) 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 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 a 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
11 For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established;

12 that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.

13 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.

14 I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.

15 So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.

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.
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. 

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

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.

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: 

because that, 

1:16 Acts 3:26 
1 Cor 1:18, 24 
1:17 Heb 2:4 
Rom 3:21-22 
Gal 3:13 
Heb 10:38 
1:18 Eph 5:6 
Col 3:3 
1:20 Job 12:7-9 
Ps 19:1 

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. 

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 God himself 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,
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. 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves; 25 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.

26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use of sex. 27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the same sex, and as it were became better than it ought to be. They used their own proper power for that which is against nature: 28 and received in themselves that which is proper to be punished, being filled with all unrighteousness, covetousness, maliciousness, envy, evil speaking, deceit, malice; they are hater of God: 29 who, knowing the judgment of God, that they which practice such things are worthy of death, not only do them, but have pleasure in them that are doing them. 

1:21–32

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.

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).

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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.27 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.

28 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; 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 backbiters, haters of God, despightful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful. 32 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. 2 But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. 3 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? 4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering: not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

5 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; 6 who will render to every man according to his deeds: 7 to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life; 8 but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; 9 but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: 10 for there is no respect of persons with God.


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).

2:11 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).
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; [14]for not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. [15]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: [16]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: [17]in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

God's law is broken

Behold, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, [18]and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; [19]and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, [20]an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, who hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.

Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? [22]Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? [23]Thou that maketh thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? [24]For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.

For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. [26]Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? [27]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?

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; 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.
3 For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? 4 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.

5 But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man) 6 God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world? 7 For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner? 8 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

2 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; 3 as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 4 there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 5 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. 6 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: 7 whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: 8 their feet are swift to shed blood: 9 destruction and misery are in their ways: 10 and the way of peace have they not known: 11 there is no fear of God before their eyes.

19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them which are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20 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

Christ took our punishment

21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 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: 23 for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; 25 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; 26 to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. 

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

Is it then the work of God? Yea, it is he which worketh in you both to will and to accomplish.

Abraham was justified by faith

What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?

For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.

For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

For even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,

saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.

How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

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:

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 was justified by faith.

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 worshiped 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).

4:11–12 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 youn-
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. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect: because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.

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, (as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

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. 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: for he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

Faith brings joy

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh...
patience; 4 and patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5 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.

6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10 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. 11 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

12 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: 13 But 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.

14 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. 15 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. 16 And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the righteousness of one by grace is the gift of righteousness, and the gift by grace, which is by one, Jesus Christ.

17 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. 18 For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive abundant grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one, Jesus Christ, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

5.4 experience: character. 5.7 peradventure: perhaps. 5.11 atonement: reconciliation. 5.14 similitude: likeness. 5.16 figure: a pattern.
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.

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 offer with open arms to lift you above the ladder of the Law, to start you as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 3. Freedom from sin’s grasp

Sin’s power is broken

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 3 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? 4 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. 6 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. 7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: 8 knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. 9 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

5:20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

6:1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? But God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? 6:2 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 6:3 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

6:4 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 6:5 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. 6:6 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: 6:7 knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. 6:8 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

6:9 dominion: mastery.

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 offer with open arms to lift you above the ladder of the Law, to start you as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?
Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. 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. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

Slaves to righteousness

What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. 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?

What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. 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

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? For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

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But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of the law, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

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 even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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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.

"In the flesh" does not mean in our skin and bones but in the mind-set of the "old man" (see 6:8). 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.

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."

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 rebellion. 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.

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 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

For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

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. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. I wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

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

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 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: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the Spirit is God's provision for victory over sin—God's provision for victory over sin.

7:14 carnal: unspiritual. 7:15 allow: understand.
the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.
9 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. 10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 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. 12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. 13 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. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.
15 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. 16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17 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
18 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. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. 20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, 21 because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.
22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even 8a carnally: spiritually. 8b enmity against: hostile to. 8c quicken: give life to. 8d mortify: put to death. 8e himself. 8f reckon: consider. 8g creation: creature. 8h manifestation: revealing. 8i vanity: futility.

you 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).

8:10 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).

8:16–17 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, forgive-ness, 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 suffer-ing 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 pur-pose. One day all creation will be transformed. Until that time it looks forward to the resurrection of God’s children (“the manifes-tation of the sons of God”).

8:21–22 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 15:22–58). We have the “firstfruits,” the first installment or down payment of the Holy Spirit as a guarantee of our resurrected 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. 24 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? 25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

26 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. 27 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.

28 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. 29 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. 30 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

31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32 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?

33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that doth justify. 34 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.

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 36 Nevertheless, to whom shall it be credited? If not to us, then to whom? 37 And if to us, then is it not to them also? 38 For we are many, whom he hath called, according to his purpose. 39 But I say, In whom shall I answer these things? I shew the firstfruits of all creation. 40 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.

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 (2:1–26; 5:1–11; 6:1–11, 22; 8:23); 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 6:1–8:9). 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 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 meditating on 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.

8:31–34 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  Ps 4:422
8:37  1 Cor 15:57
1 Jn 5:4
8:38  John 10:28
Col 3:3
9:1  2 Tim 1:7
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  Gen 21:12
Heb 11:18
9:8  Gal 3:16; 4:23
9:9  Gen 18:10, 14
9:9  Gen 25:21
9:12  Gen 25:23
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38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 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, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. 3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: 4 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; 5 whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: 7 neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. 8 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. 9 For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.

10 And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; 11 (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;) 22 it was accounted: considered.

9:3 accounted: cursed and cut off. kinsmen: people.

8:36—9:3

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**   |   **Reference**
---|---
Disobeying—Pharaoh's willful disobedience led to his hardened heart. | Exodus 4:21
Having wealth and prosperity—Taking God's blessings for granted can cause us to feel as if they were owed to us. | Deuteronomy 8:6–14
Rebelling and being discontented—Suffering or discomfort can create an attitude that blames God. | Psalm 95:8
Rejecting a deserved rebuke—Rejecting God's gift makes our neck stiff and our heart hard. | Proverbs 29:1
Refusing to listen—Refusing to listen leads to a loss of spiritual hearing. | Zechariah 7:11–13
Failing to respond—Listening to God with no intention of obeying produces an inability to obey. | 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.

8:1–3 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? 9:8 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. 13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. 14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. 15 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. 16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. 17 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. 18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. 19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? 20 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? 21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? 22 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: 23 and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, 24 even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? 25 As he saith also in Osea, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. 26 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. 27 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: 28 for he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth. 29 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

30 What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. 31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. 32 Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone: 33 as it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

10:2
Acts 22:3
10:3
Rom 9:31-32
10:4
Gal 3:24
10:5
Lew 18:5
Ezek 20:11, 13, 21
Rom 7:10
10:6-8
Deut 30:12-14
10:9
Matt 10:32
10:11
Isa 28:16
Rom 9:33
10:12
Acts 15:9
Eph 2:4-7
10:13
Jer 3:23
Acts 2:21
10:15
Hsa 52:7
Nah 1:15
10:16
Hsa 53:1
John 12:38
Heb 4:2
10:17
Gal 3:2, 5
Col 3:16
10:18
Ps 19:4

10 Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. 2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3 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. 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

Salvation is for everyone
5 For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. 6 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:) 7 or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead). 8 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; 9 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. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. 12 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. 13 For whatsoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

14 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? 15 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!

16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? 17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.


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.

10:8-12 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 complicated, 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.
Romans 11

1 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. 
2 But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke thee to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation will I anger you. 
3 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. 
4 But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

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.
2 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, 3 Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.
4 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.
5 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 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.
6 What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. 
7 (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.
8 And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them: 
9 let their eyes be darkened that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.
10 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. 
11 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?

11:13–15 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.

11:16–26 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 members 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 maintains 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? 35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? 36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

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. 2 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.

3 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. 4 For as we have many members in one body; and all members have not the same office: 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; 7 or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; 8 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.

9 Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

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.

12:2 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.

12:3 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).

12:4 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.

12:5 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.

12:7 Prophecy in Scripture is not always a prediction about the future. Often it means preaching God’s messages (1 Corinthians 14:1–3).

12:8 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 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 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; 11 not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; 12 rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; 13 giving to hospitality.

12:11 17 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. 15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. 16 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.

12:12 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. 18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. 20 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. 21 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. 2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordination of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of him? 4 Do what is good, and thou shalt have joy and peace. 5 Do not resist him that doeth evil, but whosoever resisteth the man of sin shall be destroyed under the same: 6 But render to every man according to his deed: whether he be carnal, or spiritual; Christ will judge them. 7 Render therefore to all men the things due unto them: 8 Honour all men. 9 Love one another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one an- other. 10 Be not slothful in-business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; 11 rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; 12 giving to hospitality.
resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

3 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: 4 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 to thee for good. 5 Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

6 For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. 7 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

8 Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. 9 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.

10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

11 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. 12 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. 13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. 14 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. 2 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. 3 Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth:


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 higher loyalty to God. 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 ever 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 we 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 indifference 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 (“envy”) and lust (“wantonness”) with the gross and obvious sins of drunkenness, adultery, and fornication. 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.

14:1 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...
for God hath received him. 4 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.

But one man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. 6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doeth 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. 7 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. 8 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. 9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

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. 11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. 12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. 13 Let us 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.

14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but only that things which are without are to some the very things which constrain them to sin.

14:14ff 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 unfathful 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.”

14:12 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 worshipers. 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.

14:13f 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 splitting 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. 15 But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, nowwalkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. 16 Let not then thy good be evil spoken of: 17 for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink: but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. 18 For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. 19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

20 For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure: but it is evil for that man which eateth with offence. 21 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. 22 Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. 23 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. 2 Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. 3 For even Christ pleased not himself, but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. 4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

5 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: 6 that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Fellowship among believers

7 Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God. 8 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: 9 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. 10 And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. 11 And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. 12 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.

13 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

24 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. 25 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, 26 that I should be the minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.
15:17 I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. 18 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, 19 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.

20 Yea, so have I striven to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man’s foundation; 21 but as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand. 22 For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you.

Paul explains his travel plans
23 But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you; 24 whencesoever 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.

25 But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. 26 For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. 27 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. 28 When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain. 29 And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

30 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; 31 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; 32 that I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed. 33 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: 2 that ye receive her in the Lord, as doth my soul even as she is a helper of me, and as my sister, assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

15:19 Illyricum was a Roman territory on the Adriatic Sea between present-day Italy and Greece. See the map in chapter 1, p. 1085.

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 part of Corinth, six miles from the city center.

16:2 become: worthy of. the: succourer: helper.
3Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: 4who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. 5Likewise greet the church that is in their house.

Salute my wellbeloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ. 6Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us. 7Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. 8Greet Amplias my beloved in the Lord. 9Salute Urube, our helper in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.

10Salute Apelles approved in Christ. Salute them which are of Aristobulus’ household. 11Salute Herodion my kinsman. Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord. 12Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord. 13Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.

14Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them. 15Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them. 16Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

Paul gives final instructions
21Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. 22For 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. 23For 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.

24And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

25Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you.

26I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord. 27Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, salute you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city salute you, and Quartus a brother. 28The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

29Now 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, 30but is now 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:

31To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.

16:5 1 Cor 16:15, 19 2 Cor 4:20 1 Thes 5:21
16:7 1 Cor 15:3 1 Pet 1:9 1 Pet 2:21 2 Thes 1:12
16:10 Acts 17:14
16:11 Rom 16:7, 21
16:13 Gal 1:1
16:16 2 Jn 1:1
16:19 Titus 1:16
16:20 Gen 3:15
16:21 Acts 13:1; 16:1;
17:5
16:25 1 Cor 2:1 Eph 1:3; 3:5 Col 1:24; 2:2 2 Tim 1:18 1 Pet 1:20
16:26 Rom 1:2, 5
16:27 Rom 11:36

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 Timotheus (Timotheus) was a key person in the growth of the early church, traveling with Paul on his second missionary journey (Acts 16:1–5). Later Paul wrote two letters to him as he worked to strengthen the churches in Ephesus—1 and 2 Timotheus. See his Profile in the book of 1 Timothy, p. 1833.

16:25–27 Paul exhorts his readers to be watchful and holy, and not to be carried away by false teaching or seduction. Be on guard against the false teachings of Simon Magus, a so-called apostle who was not an apostle at all, and who was condemned by Paul. Simon Magus taught his followers that he could perform miracles and even make dead people come back to life, but Paul exposed his lies and warned his readers to be wary of such false teaching. Paul exhorts his readers to be on guard and stand firm against such false teachings.

16:25–27 As Jerusalem was the center of Jewish life, Rome was the world’s political, religious, social, and economic center. 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.