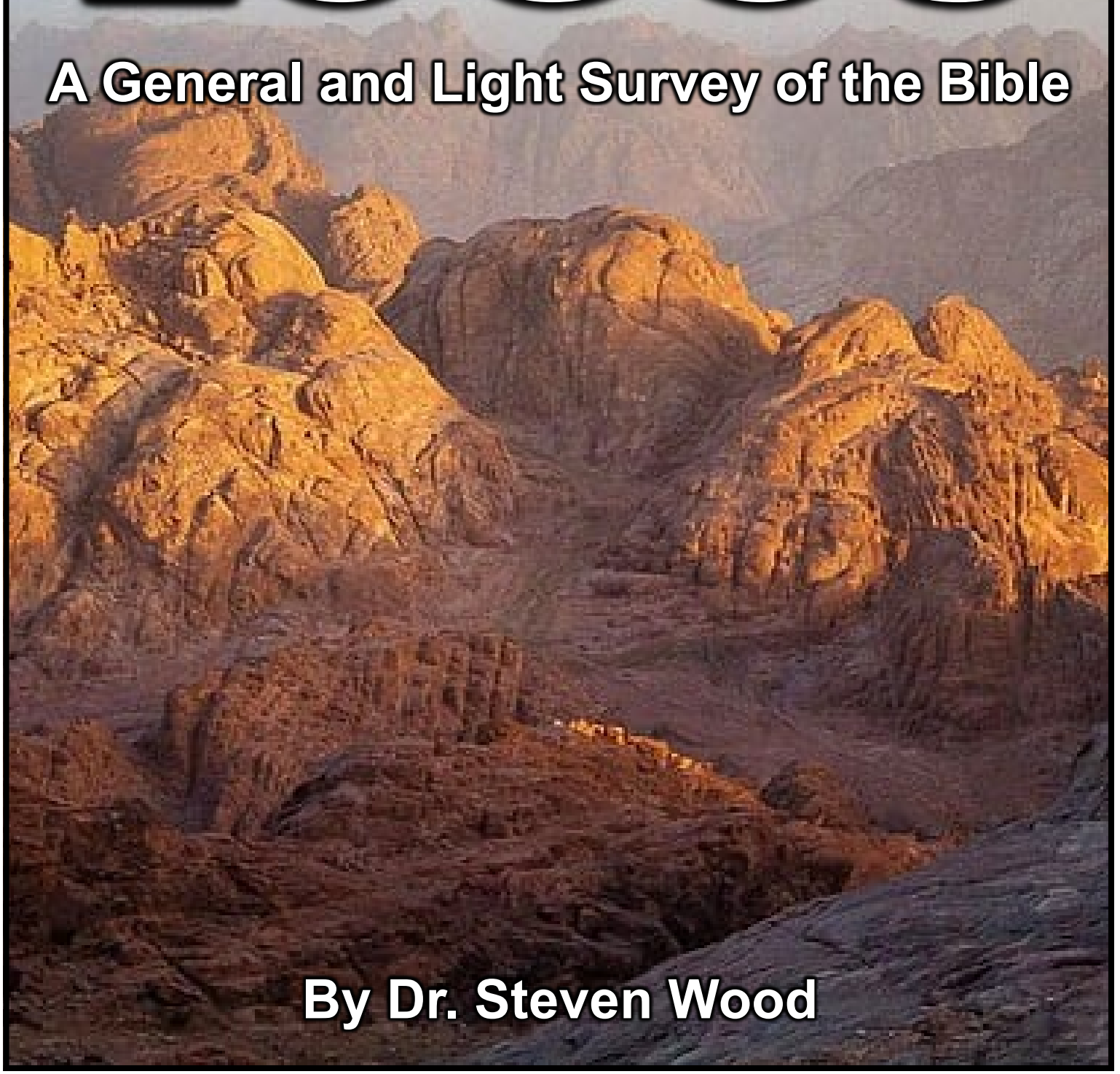
LOGOS

A General and Light Survey of the Bible



By Dr. Steven Wood

This is not a theological course. Neither is it even a university level survey of the Bible. This course is specifically written for lay people – you know the 'normal,' people who love Jesus, support their local church, and are *not* ministers – so the overwhelming majority of the Body of Christ (like I said, the *normal* people). If you were a man or woman preparing for ministry there is an excellent chance you would attend a Christian college or university and pursue a theological degree – you might even attend seminar and earn an advanced degree. Those who do that (like I did a very, very long time ago) probably start out with a survey of the Old Testament followed by a survey of the New Testament. Each one of these courses take an entire school year and form the foundation for everything that follows in a theological degree.



We do not have that kind of time and you are not, at least as far as I know, preparing for the ministry. That means you can be spared a couple hundred classroom hours where you learn to distinguish between Elijah and Elisha, Old Testament Saul and New Testament Saul, and whether or not Adam had a bellybutton. However, my pastor's heart that loves you and wants you to grow in Christ knows a general understanding of the Bible is essential to your spiritual health. So, what follows is a very, very light 31-lesson survey of the Bible.

It is my hope as we study together that you develop a general understanding of the flow of the biblical narrative from Genesis to Revelation. In addition, I hope you will complete this course with a basic knowledge of

each of the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments that allows you to navigate the Scriptures and pursue Christ. Finally, I hope this course lights a fire in you that never goes out and gives you a thirst for God's Word in such a way that you long to go deeper and then do so as you study it under the Holy Spirit's leading.

This is going to feel a little like drinking from a fire hose, so get ready. Here we go.

In Christ,
Dr. Steven Wood
Pastor – First Congregational Church
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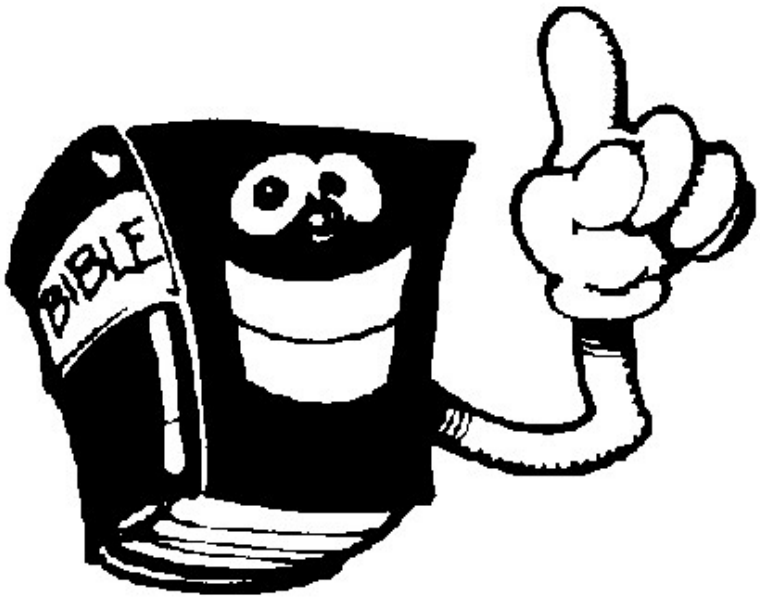


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Lesson 1

INTRODUCTION

Our Purpose

Our purpose in this course is to give each student a basic framework on which to hang future study, understanding, and application.

Our Premise

The Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God and the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments form the only reliable source of truth by which a follower of Jesus Christ can grow in their faith by becoming more like him throughout this life.

> *But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.* (2 Timothy 3:14-17)

> *We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.* (2 Peter 1:19-21)



OVERVIEW

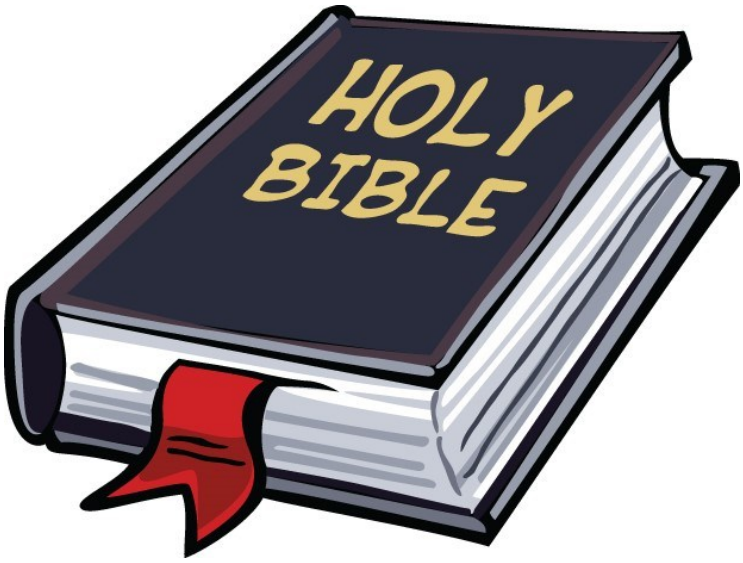
- The 66 books that make up the Old and New Testaments were written by about 40 authors and cover a period of about 1,600 years.
- The Old Testament was originally written mostly in Hebrew, with a few short passages in Aramaic. The New Testament was written in Greek. Our English Bible is a translation from these languages.
- The word testament means "covenant" or "agreement." Therefore, the Old Testament is the covenant God made with humanity before Christ came and the New Testament is the agreement God made with humanity after Christ came.

> *Brothers and sisters, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case. The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ. What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise. For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on the promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise.*
>
> *Why, then, was the law given at all? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was given through angels and entrusted to a mediator. A mediator, however, implies more than one party; but God is one.*
>
> *Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. But Scripture has locked up everything under the control of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.*
> *Before the coming of this faith, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed. So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.*
>
> *So, in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.* (Galatians 3:15-29)

OUTLINE OF THE BIBLE

- The Old Testament
  - The Pentateuch (also known as The Law)
    - Genesis
    - Exodus
    - Leviticus
    - Numbers
    - Deuteronomy
  - History
    - Joshua
    - Judges
    - Ruth
    - 1 & 2 Samuel (originally one book)
    - 1 & 2 Chronicles (originally one book)
    - 1 & 2 Kings (originally one book)
    - Ezra
    - Nehemiah
    - Esther
  - Worship – Psalms
  - Wisdom
    - Proverbs
    - Ecclesiastes
    - Song of Songs (aka Song of Solomon)
  - Prophecy
    - Major Prophets
      - Isaiah
      - Jeremiah and Lamentations
      - Ezekiel
      - Daniel
    - Minor Prophets (originally one book)
      - Hosea
      - Joel
      - Amos
      - Obadiah
      - Jonah
      - Micah
      - Nahum
      - Habakkuk
      - Zephaniah
      - Haggai
      - Zechariah
      - Malachi

- The New Testament
  - Gospels
    - Matthew
    - Mark
    - Luke
    - John
  - History – Acts
  - The Epistles
    - Epistles of Paul
      - Church Epistles
        - Romans
        - 1 & 2 Corinthians
        - Galatians
        - Ephesians (one of the prison epistles)
        - Philippians (one of the prison epistles)
        - Colossians (one of the prison epistles)
        - 1 & 2 Thessalonians
      - Pastoral Epistles
        - 1 & 2 Timothy
        - Hebrews
        - Titus
        - Philemon (one of the prison epistles)
    - General Epistles
      - James
      - 1, 2, 3 John
      - 1 & 2 Peter
      - Jude
  - Prophecy –Revelation



Lesson 2

GENESIS

- Genesis (Greek rendering of the Hebrew, bereshith = in the beginning): beginning, creation, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).
- Tradition and statements by Jesus and the Apostles attribute Genesis and the rest of the Pentateuch to Moses (Luke 2:22, 24:44; John 1:17, 7:19; Acts 13:39; 1 Corinthians 9:9; Hebrews 10:28, etc.).
- Genesis is a divinely revealed account of the beginning of everything except God.
    - The beginning of the created world (Genesis 1:1–25).
    - The beginning of humanity (Genesis 1:26, 2).
    - The beginning of sin (Genesis 3:1–7).
    - The beginning of the promise of redemption (Genesis 3:8–24).
    - The beginning of family life (Genesis 4:1–15).
    - The beginning of civilization (Genesis 4:16–9:29).
    - The beginning of nations (Genesis 10–11).
    - The beginning of God's chosen people (Genesis 12–50).
    - The beginning of other things, such as God's judgment, the use of altars, physical death, etc., are also seen throughout the book.

OUTLINE

- The Beginning.
    - Creation (1–2).
        - This is not human theory, but divine testimony.
        - If we accept the premise, *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"* (Genesis 1:1), everything else in Scripture begins to fall into place.
        - The time between vv. 1 & 2 is unknown, but leaves ample room for geologic eras, changes to the earth, even dinosaurs.
        - *"In the beginning God,"* does not represent the beginning of God (he is eternal, transcendent of time and space), or the beginning of the universe, or even the earth, which was formless and empty. It describes the beginning of the story, the events revealed to Moses.
        - The phrase, *"the earth was formless and empty,"* (v. 2) can accurately be translated, "the earth became formless and empty," since was and became are both included in the Hebrew word, *haya* (Hebrew): *to be, to become, to exist, to occur.*
        - The darkness [that] was over the surface of the deep could describe the chaos and resulting darkness that existed in the universe before God declared, *"Let there be light"* (v. 3).
        - Because God is omnipotent, the six days of Creation (vv. 3-31) may be taken literally by those who choose to do so.

However, those who choose to take the six days as a description of the order of Creation, may do so, as well.

- The Fall (3–4).
  - The strategy Satan used on Adam and Eve is still his strategy today.
    - Questioning God's Word – *"Did God really say…"* (v. 1).
    - Lying – *"You will not certainly die…"* (vv. 5-6). *Compare with vv. 16-17.
    - Appealing to the senses – *"When the woman saw…"* (vv. 6).
  - Results of sin.
    - Selfishness – *"they realized they were naked… [and] made coverings for themselves"* (v. 7). *Note how Adam blamed Eve (and God). *"The woman you put here with me… gave me some fruit from the tree and I ate it"* (v. 12).
    - Estrangement from God – they hid from him and lied to him (vv. 8-10).
    - God cursed the serpent, Eve, and then Adam before banishing them from the Garden of Eden (vv. 14-19).
  - The *protoevangelium* (Latin – the first hope of redemption): *"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel"* (Genesis 3:25).
  - Adam and Eve's children:
    - Cain (4:1).
    - Abel (4:2a) – killed by Cain (4:2b-16).
    - Seth (4:25-26).
- The flood (5–9).
  - Just nine generations after Adam (5:1-32), Noah was chosen with his family to survive God's punishment through the coming flood because he, *"…found favor in the eyes of the LORD"* (6:8) because he was, *"…a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God"* (6:8-10).
  - God told Noah his plan and gave specific instructions for building an ark (6:13-22).
  - Note: It had never rained before! *"Now no shrub had yet appeared on the earth and no plant had yet sprung up, for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground, but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground"* (Genesis 2:5-6).
  - It rained 40 days while water also came up from the earth (7:11-12) and Noah and his family spent over a year on the ark (7:12, 14).

        - God created the rainbow to represent his promise never to flood the earth and destroy life again (9:12-17).
    - The Tower of Babel (10–11).
        - Note: This account is not in chronological order with chapter 10 and chapter 10 is not necessarily an exhaustive list of people. There is no way to know how much time passed from Noah to the Tower of Babel.
        - Human pride – *"Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth"* (11:4)
        *Remember, God told Noah and his family, *"Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth"* (9:1).
        - *"But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. The LORD said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other." So, the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city."* (11:5-8)
- The Patriarchs.
    - Abram, aka Abraham (12–23).
        - The Covenant – The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." (12:1-3).
        - Note, God's seven promises in covenant with Abram's obedience:
            - *"I will make you into a great nation..."*
            - *"...I will bless you..."*
            - *"...I will make your name great..."*
            - *"...you will be a blessing."*
            - *"I will bless who bless you…"*
            - *"...whoever curses you I will curse…"*
            - *"...all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."*
        - This covenant was confirmed again to Abram/Abraham (13:14-17, 15:1-21, 17:1-27, 22:1-19), his son Isaac (26:1-6, 23-25), and his grandson, Jacob (28:10–15, 32:22-32).
    - Isaac (24–26).
    - Jacob, aka Israel (27–36):
        - +Reuben (29:32)
        - +Simeon (29:33)

        - +Levi (29:34)
        - +Judah (29:35)
        - ~Dan (30:6)
        - ~Naphtali (Genesis 30:8)
        - -Gad (30:13)
        - -Asher (30:13)
        - +Issachar (30:18)
        - +Zebulon (30:20)
        - *Joseph (30:24)
        - *Benjamin (35:18)
- Joseph (37–50).
    - Jacob/Israel's favorite son (37:3-4).
    - Sold into Egyptian slavery (37:12-36).
    - Ended up as Pharoah's second in command (41:41-56) and saved his whole family (42:1-46:7).

Next Week: Read Exodus.



Lesson 3

EXODUS

- Exodus means "the outgoing" of the Israelites from the land of Egypt.
- Tradition and statements by Jesus and the Apostles attribute Exodus and the rest of the Pentateuch to Moses (Luke 2:22, 24:44; John 1:17, 7:19; Acts 13:39; 1 Corinthians 9:9; Hebrews 10:28, etc.).
- Exodus is a Book of Redemption, telling how God delivered the Israelites bondage under Pharoah in Egypt and established them as his chosen nation.

How did Israel end up in slavery?

- Jacob, aka Israel, traveled with his family to Egypt because there was a famine throughout the region and his son, Joseph was in charge of Pharoah's storehouse of grain. *"All those who went to Egypt with Jacob—those who were his direct descendants, not counting his sons' wives—numbered sixty-six persons. With the two sons who had been born to Joseph in Egypt, the members of Jacob's family, which went to Egypt, were seventy in all"* (Genesis 46:26-27).
- Because he favored Joseph, Pharoah showed kindness to his family. *"Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'Your father and your brothers have come to you, and the land of Egypt is before you; settle your father and your brothers in the best part of the land. Let them live in Goshen. And if you know of any among them with special ability, put them in charge of my own livestock'"* (Genesis 47:5-6).
- *Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died, but the Israelites were exceedingly fruitful; they multiplied greatly, increased in numbers and became so numerous that the land was filled with them. Then a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt. "Look," he said to his people, "the Israelites have become far too numerous for us. Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country." So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh. But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites and worked them ruthlessly.* (Exodus 1:6-13)
- There are about 400 years represented in Exodus 1:14.
- *As the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him. Then the LORD said to him, "Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there. But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. You, however, will go to your ancestors in peace and be buried at a good old age. In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure."* (Genesis 15:12-16)

- *"Now the length of time the Israelite people lived in Egypt was 430 years"* (Exodus 12:40).

OUTLINE

- The Exodus (Chapters 1-31)
  - The birth of Moses.

    Now a man of the tribe of Levi married a Levite woman, and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile. His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him.

    Then Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the riverbank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her female slave to get it. She opened it and saw the baby. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him.

    "This is one of the Hebrew babies," she said.

    Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?"

    "Yes, go," she answered.

    So, the girl went and got the baby's mother.

    Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you."

    So, the woman took the baby and nursed him. When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, "I drew him out of the water." (Exodus 2:1-10)
  - Moses flees Egypt.

    One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people. Looking this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.

    …When Pharaoh heard of this, he tried to kill Moses, but Moses fled from Pharaoh and went to live in Midian… (Exodus 2:11-12, 15).

    *Moses was probably in Midian about 30 years. He married Zipporah and they had a son. Meanwhile, Pharoah died. (Exodus 2:15 -25)
  - The burning bush.

    Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So,

Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up."

When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!"

And Moses said, "Here I am."

"Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."

Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob."

At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So, I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey… So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."

But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"

And God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain."

Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"

God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" (Exodus 3:1-22)

...Moses answered, "What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, 'The LORD did not appear to you'?"

Then the LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?"

"A staff," he replied.

The LORD said, "Throw it on the ground."

Moses threw it on the ground and it became a snake, and he ran from it.

Then the LORD said to him, "Reach out your hand and take it by the tail."

So Moses reached out and took hold of the snake and it turned back into a staff in his hand.

"This," said the LORD, "is so that they may believe…

Then the LORD said, "Put your hand inside your cloak."

So Moses put his hand into his cloak, and when he took it out, the skin was leprous—it had become as white as snow.

"Now put it back into your cloak," he said.

So Moses put his hand back into his cloak, and when he took it out, it was restored, like the rest of his flesh.

Then the LORD said, "If they do not believe you or pay atten-

tion to the first sign, they may believe the second. But if they do not believe these two signs or listen to you, take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground. The water you take from the river will become blood on the ground."

Moses said to the LORD, "Pardon your servant, Lord. I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue."

The LORD said to him, "Who gave human beings their mouths? Who makes them deaf or mute? Who gives them sight or makes them blind? Is it not I, the LORD? Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say."

But Moses said, "Pardon your servant, Lord. Please send someone else." Then the LORD's anger burned against Moses… (Exodus 4:1-17)

- The Plagues.
  When Moses and Aaron went to Pharoah and told him, *"This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival to me in the wilderness'"* (Exodus 5:1), Pharoah refused and increased the slave's workload (Exodus 5:6-21). God sent a series of 10 plagues on Egypt:
  - Water turned to blood (Exodus 7:14-24).
  - Frogs (Exodus 8:1-15).
  - Gnats (Exodus 8:16-19).
  - Flies (Exodus 8:20-32).
  - Death of livestock (Exodus 9:1-7).
  - Boils (Exodus 9:8-12).
  - Hail (Exodus 9:13-35).
  - Locusts (Exodus 10:1-20).
  - Darkness (10:21-29).
  - Death of the firstborn (Exodus 11:1-12:30)
    *God instituted the Passover for Israel to commemorate this night.
- *During the night Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Up! Leave my people, you and the Israelites! Go, worship the LORD as you have requested. Take your flocks and herds, as you have said, and go. And also bless me." The Egyptians urged the people to hurry and leave the country. "For otherwise," they said, "we will all die!" So the people took their dough before the yeast was added, and carried it on their shoulders in kneading troughs wrapped in clothing. The Israelites did as Moses instructed and asked the Egyptians for articles of silver and gold and for clothing. The LORD had made the Egyptians favorably disposed toward the people, and they gave them what they asked for; so they plundered the Egyptians.* (Exodus 12:31-36)
- When the Israelites came to the Red Sea God parted the Sea so they could cross and then closed the path on the Egyptian army (Exodus 14).

- God provided water (Exodus 15:22-27; 17:1-7) and food (Exodus 16) for the Israelites. He also protected them from the Amalekites (Exodus 17:8-16).
- The Ten Commandments.
  God gave Moses the Commandments on Mount Sinai (Exodus 19 -20).
  - "You shall have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3).
  - "You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them" (Exodus 20:4-5).
  - "You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name" (Exodus 20:7).
  - "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy" (Exodus 20:8).
  - "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you" (Exodus 20:12).
  - "You shall not murder" (Exodus 20:13).
  - "You shall not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14).
  - "You shall not steal" (Exodus 20:15).
  - "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor" (Exodus 20:16).
  - "You shall not covet…" (Exodus 20:17).
- In addition to the Commandments, God gave Moses the laws and regulations that established the civic and religious systems for the Israelite nation (Exodus 21-23). He also gave them instructions for the Tabernacle, the Ark of the Covenant, and the priesthood (Exodus 24-31).

- The Golden Calf (Chapters 32-34).
  - While Moses was on Mount Sinai the Israelites became impatient. *"When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, 'Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him'"* (Exodus 32:1).
  - They gathered all their gold and Aaron made it into an idol in the shape of a calf. (Exodus 32:2-6).
  - God was so angry he was going to destroy everyone except Moses and his family, but Moses pleaded for the people and God withheld his wrath. However, Moses was so angry he smashed the stone tablets, ground the golden calf into powder, and made the Israelites drink it and had the Levites execute 3,000 people (Exodus 32:23-29). *"And the LORD struck the people with a plague because of what they did with the calf Aaron had made"* (Exodus 32:35).

    - Moses continued to plead with God on behalf of the Israelites. God gave him a new set of stone tablets and reestablished the broken Covenant (Exodus 33-34)
- The Tabernacle, the Ark of the Covenant, and priestly garments (Exodus 33-40).
  The people built the Tabernacle, the furnishings, the Ark of the Covenant, and the priestly garments according to God's instructions.

Next week: Read Leviticus



Lesson 4

LEVITICUS

- The Book Leviticus gets its name from the Levites — the priests — and it is God's plan for the detailed walk, worship, and service of the people.
- In Exodus, God spoke out of the Mount where the people were not allowed. In Leviticus He spoke out of the tabernacle in which He dwelt in the midst of His people.
- Leviticus was written to show Israel how to live in fellowship with God.
- Moses was the author. Leviticus states at least 56 times God gave the laws to His people through Moses.

<u>Redemption Progression</u>

- Genesis: the ruin of humanity through the fall.
- Exodus redemption and deliverance by blood and the power of God.
- Leviticus: worship and communion based on atonement.
    - The sacrificial system. *"For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life"* (Leviticus 17:11).
    - The Law. *"Keep my decrees and laws, for the person who obeys them will live by them. I am the LORD"* (Leviticus 18:5).
    - The punishment for disobedience.
        - *"…if you will not listen to me and carry out all these commands, and if you reject my decrees and abhor my laws and fail to carry out all my commands and so violate my covenant… I will bring on you sudden terror, wasting diseases and fever that will destroy your sight and sap your strength. You will plant seed in vain because your enemies will eat it. I will set my face against you so that you will be defeated by your enemies…"* (Leviticus 26:14-17).
        - *"If after all this you will not listen to me, I will punish you for your sins seven times over... Your strength will be spent in vain, because your soil will not yield its crops, nor will the trees of your land yield their fruit."* (Leviticus 26:18-20)
        - *"If you remain hostile toward me and refuse to listen to me, I will multiply your afflictions seven times over… I will send wild animals against you, and they will rob you of your children, destroy your cattle and make you so few in number that your roads will be deserted."* (Leviticus 26:21-22)
        - *"If in spite of these things you do not accept my correction… I will be hostile toward you and will afflict you for your sins seven times over... I will bring the sword on you…*

I will send a plague among you, and you will be given into enemy hands. …You will eat, but you will not be satisfied." (Leviticus 26:23-26)

- *"If in spite of this you still do not listen to me… then in my anger I will be hostile toward you, and I will punish you for your sins seven times over. You will eat the flesh of your sons and the flesh of your daughters. I will destroy your high places, cut down your incense altars and pile your dead bodies on the lifeless forms of your idols… I will turn your cities into ruins and lay waste your sanctuaries, and I will take no delight in the pleasing aroma of your offerings. …I will scatter you among the nations… Those of you who are left will waste away in the lands of their enemies because of their sins…"* (Leviticus 26:27-38).

<u>The Value of Leviticus</u>

- Revelation of the divine character and holiness of God - God has not changed.
- The exceeding sinfulness of humanity and estrangement from God.
- A body of civil law for a theocracy.

OUTLINE

- The Way to God (chapters 1-17).
  - The Offerings (chapters 1–7).
    - The Burnt (Food) Offering (ch. 1). *The LORD called to Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting. He said, "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When anyone among you brings an offering to the LORD, bring as your offering an animal from either the herd or the flock"* (1:11-2). *"If the offering to the LORD is a burnt offering of birds, you are to offer a dove or a young pigeon"* (1:14).
      - *…a male without defect…*
      - *…slaughter [it] before the Lord…*
      - *The priests shall… splash the blood on the sides of the altar…*
      - *…cut it into pieces…*
      - *…arrange the pieces …burn all of it…*
    - The Grain Offering (Chapter 2) *"When anyone brings a grain offering to the LORD, their offering is to be of the finest flour. They are to pour olive oil on it, put incense on it"* (2:1).
      - *…pour olive oil on it, put incense on it…*
      - *…it is to be made without yeast…*
      - *…take it to …the priests…*
      - *…burn a …portion on the altar…*
      - *…the rest …belongs to Aaron and his sons…*

- The Peace (Fellowship) Offering (Chapter 3) *"If your offering is a fellowship offering, and you offer an animal from the herd, whether male or female, you are to present before the LORD an animal without defect."* (3:1) *"If you offer an animal from the flock as a fellowship offering to the LORD, you are to offer a male or female without defect."* (3:6)
- *…lay your hand on its head and slaughter it…*
    - *…the priests shall splash the blood against the sides of the altar…*
    - *…bring the internal organs and all the fat…*
    - *…the priest shall burn them on the altar…*
- The Sin Offering (Chapter 4).
    - *"If the anointed priest sins, bringing guilt on the people, he must bring to the LORD a young bull without defect as a sin offering for the sin he has committed."* (4:3)
    - *"If the whole Israelite community sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD's commands, even though the community is unaware of the matter, when they realize their guilt and the sin they committed becomes known, the assembly must bring a young bull as a sin offering and present it before the tent of meeting. The elders of the community are to lay their hands on the bull's head before the LORD, and the bull shall be slaughtered before the LORD."* (4:13-15)
    - *"When a leader sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the commands of the LORD his God, when he realizes his guilt and the sin he has committed becomes known, he must bring as his offering a male goat without defect. He is to lay his hand on the goat's head and slaughter it at the place where the burnt offering is slaughtered before the LORD. It is a sin offering."* (4:22-24)
    - *"If any member of the community sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD's commands, when they realize their guilt and the sin they have committed becomes known, they must bring as their offering for the sin they committed a female goat without defect. They are to lay their hand on the head of the sin offering and slaughter it at the place of the burnt offering."* (4:27-29)
- The Trespass Offering (ch. 5). *"If anyone sins because they do not speak up when they hear a public charge to testify regarding something they have seen or learned about... if they unwittingly touch anything ceremonially unclean... if*

anyone thoughtlessly takes an oath to do anything, whether good or evil… they must confess in what way they have sinned. As a penalty for the sin they have committed, they must bring to the LORD a female lamb or goat from the flock as a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for them for their sin.

- The Priesthood (Chapters 8–10).
    - Chosen. *The LORD said to Moses, "Bring Aaron and his sons, their garments, the anointing oil, the bull for the sin offering, the two rams and the basket containing bread made without yeast and gather the entire assembly at the entrance to the tent of meeting."* (8:1-3)
    - Consecration. *Then Moses brought Aaron and his sons forward and washed them with water. He put the tunic on Aaron, tied the sash around him, clothed him with the robe and put the ephod on him. He also fastened the ephod with a decorative waistband, which he tied around him. He placed the breastpiece on him and put the Urim and Thummim in the breastpiece. Then he placed the turban on Aaron's head and set the gold plate, the sacred emblem, on the front of it, as the LORD commanded Moses.* (8:5-9) *He poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him to consecrate him. Then he brought Aaron's sons forward, put tunics on them, tied sashes around them and fastened caps on them, as the LORD commanded Moses.* (8:12-13)
    - Chastised. *Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, contrary to his command. So fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD.* (10:1)
- Regulations for the People. (Chapters 11-17).
    - Clean and unclean food (chapter 11). The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, *"Say to the Israelites: 'Of all the animals that live on land, these are the ones you may eat…'"* (v. 1)
        - *You may eat any animal that has a divided hoof and that chews the cud.*
        - *There are some that only chew the cud or only have a divided hoof, but you must not eat them. The camel, though it chews the cud, does not have a divided hoof... The hyrax, though it chews the cud, does not have a divided hoof... The rabbit, though it chews the cud, does not have a divided hoof... And the pig, though it has a divided hoof, does not chew the cud; it is unclean for you. You must not eat their meat or touch their carcasses…*
        - *Of all the creatures living in the water of the seas and the streams you may eat any that have fins and scales. But all creatures in the seas or streams that do not have fins and*

scales… you are to regard as unclean.
    - *These are the birds you are to regard as unclean and not eat because they are unclean: the eagle, the vulture, the black vulture, the red kite, any kind of black kite, any kind of raven, the horned owl, the screech owl, the gull, any kind of hawk, the little owl, the cormorant, the great owl, the white owl, the desert owl, the osprey, the stork, any kind of heron, the hoopoe and the bat.*
    - *All flying insects that walk on all fours are to be regarded as unclean by you. There are, however, some flying insects that walk on all fours that you may eat: those that have jointed legs for hopping on the ground... you may eat any kind of locust, katydid, cricket or grasshopper.*
    - *Of all the animals that walk on all fours, those that walk on their paws are unclean for you…*
    - *Of the animals that move along the ground, these are unclean for you: the weasel, the rat, any kind of great lizard, the gecko, the monitor lizard, the wall lizard, the skink and the chameleon.*
    - *If an animal that you are allowed to eat dies, anyone who touches its carcass will be unclean till evening.*
    - *"You must not eat the blood of any creature, because the life of every creature is its blood; anyone who eats it must be cut off."*
- Purification of women. *A woman who becomes pregnant and gives birth to a son will be ceremonially unclean for seven days, just as she is unclean during her monthly period. On the eighth day the boy is to be circumcised. Then the woman must wait thirty-three days to be purified from her bleeding... If she gives birth to a daughter, for two weeks the woman will be unclean, as during her period. Then she must wait sixty-six days to be purified from her bleeding. When the days of her purification for a son or daughter are over, she is to bring to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting a year-old lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a dove for a sin offering.* (12:1-7)
- Skin Diseases and Discharges. (Chapters 13:1-48; 14:1-32; 15:1-33)
- Molds. (Chapters 13:47-59; 14:33-57)
- The Day of Atonement, aka Yom Kippur. (Chapter 16) *The LORD said to Moses: "Tell your brother Aaron that he is not to come whenever he chooses into the Most Holy Place behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover on the ark, or else he will die. For I will appear in the cloud over the atonement cover."* (16:2)
    - *This is how Aaron is to enter the Most Holy Place: He must first bring a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. He is to put on the sacred linen tunic, with*

linen undergarments next to his body; he is to tie the linen sash around him and put on the linen turban. These are sacred garments; so he must bathe himself with water before he puts them on. From the Israelite community he is to take two male goats for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. (16:3-5)

- *Aaron is to offer the bull for his own sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household. Then he is to take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the entrance to the tent of meeting. He is to cast lots for the two goats—one lot for the LORD and the other for the scapegoat. Aaron shall bring the goat whose lot falls to the LORD and sacrifice it for a sin offering. But the goat chosen by lot as the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD to be used for making atonement by sending it into the wilderness as a scapegoat.* (16:6-10)
- *"When Aaron has finished making atonement for the Most Holy Place, the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall bring forward the live goat. He is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites—all their sins—and put them on the goat's head. He shall send the goat away into the wilderness in the care of someone appointed for the task. The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a remote place; and the man shall release it in the wilderness.* (16:20-22)
- *This is to be a lasting ordinance for you: Atonement is to be made once a year for all the sins of the Israelites."* (16:34)

- Unlawful Sexual Relations (Chapter 18) These are forbidden:
  - Incest (vv. 6-18).
  - During a woman's period (v. 19).
  - A neighbor's wife (v. 20).
  - Child sacrifice (v. 21).
  - Homosexuality (v. 22).
  - Bestiality (v 23).
- Various Other Laws (Chapter 19)
- Reinforcing the Commandments (vv. 1-4, 12, 20, 30)
  - *When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner.* (v. 9-10)
  - *Do not hold back the wages of a hired worker overnight.* (v. 13)
  - *Do not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block in front of the blind…* (v. 14)
  - *Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great but judge your neighbor fairly.* (v. 15)
  - *Do not go about spreading slander among your people.* (v. 16a)

- *Do not do anything that endangers your neighbor's life.* (v. 16b)
- *Do not hate a fellow Israelite in your heart.* (v. 17a)
- *Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in their guilt.* (v. 17b)
- *Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people but love your neighbor as yourself.* (v. 18)
- *Do not mate different kinds of animals.* (v. 19b)
- *Do not plant your field with two kinds of seed.* (v. 19c)
- *Do not wear clothing woven of two kinds of material.* (v. 19d)
- *Do not eat any meat with the blood still in it.* (v. 26a)
- *Do not practice divination or seek omens.* (v. 26b)
- *Do not cut the hair at the sides of your head or clip off the edges of your beard.* (v. 27a)
- *Do not cut your bodies for the dead or put tattoo marks on yourselves.* (v. 28)
- *Do not degrade your daughter by making her a prostitute…* (v. 29)
- *Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists…* (v. 31)
- *Stand up in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly…* (v. 32)
- *When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them.* (v. 33)
- Punishments (Chapter 20).
- *Any Israelite or any foreigner residing in Israel who sacrifices any of his children to Molek is to be put to death. The members of the community are to stone him.* (v. 2)
- *I will set my face against anyone who turns to mediums and spiritists…* (v. 6) *A man or woman who is a medium or spiritist among you must be put to death. You are to stone them…* (v. 27)
- *Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.* (v. 9)
- *If a man commits adultery with another man's wife - with the wife of his neighbor - both the adulterer and the adulteress are to be put to death.* (v. 10) *also includes *his father's wife* (v. 11), *his daughter-in-law* (v. 12), *with a man as one does with a woman* (v. 13), *an animal* (vv. 15-16).

- Rules for the Priesthood (Chapters 21-22). *The priests are to perform my service in such a way that they do not become guilty and die for treating it with contempt. I am the LORD, who makes them holy.* (v. 9).
- The Festivals (Chapter 23).
  - Passover (23:4-8).
  - Firstfruits (23:9-14).
  - Weeks (23:15-22).
  - Trumpets (23:23-25).
  - Day of Atonement (23:26-32)

    - Tabernacles (23:33-44).
- Oil and Bread for the Tabernacle (24:1-9).
- A Blasphemer is Put to Death (24:10-23).
- The Sabbath Year (25:1-7).
    - The land was to be worked for six years and then rested during the seventh year.
    - No organized sowing, pruning, reaping, or harvesting.
    - Whatever grew on its own could be eaten by anyone.
    - The Israelites neglected observing the Sabbath Year on many occasions.
- The Year of Jubilee (25:8-55).
    - After seven Sabbath Years (49 years) a year of Jubilee was to begin on the Day of Atonement – *the tenth day of the seventh month* (25:9).
    - Property was to be restored to the original owners.
    - Houses were to be returned to the original owners, except those within walled cities.
    - Slaves were to be released.
    - The Sabbath Year was extended to a second year.
    - There is no biblical or historical evidence that the Year of Jubilee was ever observed.
- Reward and Punishment (Chapter 26).
- Vows Before the Lord (Chapter 27)

NEXT WEEK: Read the Book of Numbers



Lesson 5:

NUMBERS

- This book was originally titled with the Hebrew phrase for, "Numbers In the Wilderness." It was given the Greek name *Arithmai* in the Septuagint, then *Numeri* in the Latin Vulgate, and *Numbers* in English. It was so named because it contains two census reports, once at the beginning and again toward the end.
- Numbers takes up where Exodus left off. There is about a month between the end of Exodus and the beginning of Numbers. The instructions in Leviticus were given during that time.
    - *"So, the tabernacle was set up on the first day of the first month in the second year"* (Exodus 40:17).
    - *"The LORD spoke to Moses in the tent of meeting in the Desert of Sinai on the first day of the second month of the second year after the Israelites came out of Egypt"* (Numbers 1:1).
- The New Testament refers to Numbers on at least two occasions:
    - *For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock* (ref. Numbers 20:11) *that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness* (ref. Numbers 14:29). *Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry." We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died* (ref. Numbers 25:1-9). *We should not test Christ, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes* (ref. Numbers 21:5-6). *And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel. These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come.* (1 Corinthians 10:1-11)
    - *Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. "Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house* (ref. Numbers 12:7)*," bearing witness to what would be spoken by God in the future. But Christ is faithful as the Son over God's house. And we are his house, if indeed we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory. So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the wilderness,*

where your ancestors tested and tried me, though for forty years they saw what I did (ref. Numbers 14:3)*. That is why I was angry with that generation; I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.' So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.'" See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end. As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion." Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt* (ref. Numbers 14:2)*? And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies perished in the wilderness* (ref. Numbers 14:29)*? And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.* (Hebrews 3:7–19)

- Numbers is a book of movement – movement through the wilderness and movement from one generation to the next. There are two generations, two numberings, and two sets of instructions.

OUTLINE

- The Old Generation (Chapters 1–14) – traveling from Sinai to Kadesh.
    - The numbering (Chapters 1–4). This The numbering (census) was for military purposes. Each of the twelve tribes were numbered and assigned a position around the tabernacle.
        - Chapter 1 - Numbering of adult males.
        - Chapter 2 - Distribution of the tribes.
        - Chapter 3 - Numbering of Levite males (priesthood). They were exempt from the general census. As priests, they were set apart to serve God and care for the tabernacle.
        - Chapter 4 - Distribution of Levite duties.
    - Instructions Chapters 5-10). These five chapters deal with the inward condition of the camp.
    - Chapter 5 - Deals with purity, honesty, and truth.
    - Chapter 6 - The Nazarite Vow.
        - *A special vow, a vow of dedication to the Lord* (v. 2).
        - *They must abstain from wine and other fermented drink and must not drink vinegar made from wine or other fermented drink. They must not drink grape juice or eat grapes or raisins... they must not eat anything that comes from the grapevine, not even the seeds or skins* (vv. 3-4).
        - *… no razor may be used on their head... they must let their hair grow* long (v. 5).
        - *…must not go near a dead body. Even if their own father or*

mother or brother or sister dies, they must not make themselves ceremonially unclean on account of them… (vv. 6-7).

- *If someone dies suddenly in the Nazirite's presence… they must shave their head on the seventh day… Then on the eighth day they must bring two doves or two young pigeons to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting... one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering… That same day they are to consecrate their head again... for the same period of dedication and must bring a year-old male lamb as a guilt offering. The previous days do not count…* (vv. 9-12).
- *…when the period of their dedication is over. They are to be brought to the entrance to the tent of meeting. There they are to present their offerings to the LORD: a year-old male lamb without defect for a burnt offering, a year-old ewe lamb without defect for a sin offering, a ram without defect for a fellowship offering, together with their grain offerings and drink offerings, and a basket of bread made with the finest flour and without yeast - thick loaves with olive oil mixed in, and thin loaves brushed with olive oil... Then at the entrance to the tent of meeting, the Nazirite must shave off the hair that symbolizes their dedication. They are to take the hair and put it in the fire that is under the sacrifice of the fellowship offering… the priest is to place in their hands a boiled shoulder of the ram, and one thick loaf and one thin loaf from the basket… then wave these before the LORD as a wave offering; they are holy and belong to the priest… After that, the Nazirite may drink wine.* (vv. 13-20)

- Chapter 7 - the free-will offering of leaders of each tribe for the work of the Tabernacle.
- Chapter 8 - the consecration of Levites.
- Chapter 9
  - Observing the Passover (vv. 1-14).
  - *On the day the tabernacle, the tent of the covenant law, was set up, the cloud covered it. From evening till morning the cloud above the tabernacle looked like fire. That is how it continued to be; the cloud covered it, and at night it looked like fire. Whenever the cloud lifted from above the tent, the Israelites set out; wherever the cloud settled, the Israelites encamped. At the LORD's command the Israelites set out, and at his command they encamped. As long as the cloud stayed over the tabernacle, they remained in camp. When the cloud remained over the tabernacle a long time, the Israelites obeyed the LORD's order and did not set out. Sometimes the cloud was over the tabernacle only a few days; at the LORD's command they would encamp, and then at his command they would set out. Sometimes the*

cloud stayed only from evening till morning, and when it lifted in the morning, they set out. Whether by day or by night, whenever the cloud lifted, they set out. Whether the cloud stayed over the tabernacle for two days or a month or a year, the Israelites would remain in camp and not set out; but when it lifted, they would set out. At the LORD's command they encamped, and at the LORD's command they set out. They obeyed the LORD's order, in accordance with his command through Moses. (vv. 15-23)

- Chapter 10
  - Two trumpets (vv. 1-10).
  - Leaving Sinai.
- Chapters 11
  - *Now the people complained about their hardships in the hearing of the LORD, and when he heard them his anger was aroused. Then fire from the LORD burned among them and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp. When the people cried out to Moses, he prayed to the LORD and the fire died down. So that place was called Taberah, because fire from the LORD had burned among them.* (vv. 1-3)
  - Quail from the Lord (vv. 4-35).
- Chapter 12
  - *Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because of his Cushite wife… "Has the LORD spoken only through Moses?" they asked. "Hasn't he also spoken through us?" And the LORD heard this.* (vv. 1-2)
  - *…he said, "Listen to my words: When there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, reveal myself to them in visions, I speak to them in dreams. But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house. With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"* (vv. 6-8)
  - Miriam was struck with leprosy, but Moses prayed for her healing and it was given after seven days outside the camp.
- Chapters 12-14 – Exploring the Promised Land.
  - Moses sent twelve men, one from each tribe to explore Canaan – among these were Caleb and Joshua.
  - *They came back to Moses and Aaron and the whole Israelite community at Kadesh… There they reported to them… and showed them the fruit of the land. "We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can*

certainly do it." But the men who had gone up with him said, "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are... The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. We saw the Nephilim there… we seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them." (13:26-33)

- The Nephilim – *"The Nephilim were on the earth in those days—and also afterward—when the sons of God went to the daughters of humans and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown"* (Genesis 6:4).
- They were probably powerful rulers who were controlled (indwelt) by fallen angels (demons).
- These *sons of God* were not divine if they were demon-controlled. They were powerful and demon-influenced, but mortal. Their children were apparently giants by the standards of the biblical era. However, they were flesh and they died out in due course.

- *That night all the members of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, "If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this wilderness! Why is the LORD bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?" And they said to each other, "We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt."* (14:1-4)
- God was ready to destroy the whole nation, but Moses pleased for them.
- *The LORD replied, "I have forgiven them, as you asked. Nevertheless, as surely as I live and as surely as the glory of the LORD fills the whole earth, not one of those who saw my glory and the signs I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness… not one of them will ever see the land I promised on oath to their ancestors."* (14:20-23) *In this wilderness your bodies will fall—every one of you twenty years old or more who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me. Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.* (14:29-30)
- *…these men who were responsible for spreading the bad report about the land were struck down and died of a plague before the LORD. Of the men who went to explore the land, only Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh survived.* (14:37-38)
- *Early the next morning they set out for the highest point in the hill country, saying, "Now we are ready to go up to the land the LORD promised. Surely we have sinned!" …Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in that hill country came down and*

attacked them and beat them down all the way to Hormah. (14:40, 45)

- The Wandering-Transition Era (Chapters 15–20).
  - Chapter 15 – God expressed hope for the coming generation by giving additional instructions regarding offerings, keeping the Sabbath, and wearing tassels on their garments.
  - Chapter 16 – Another rebellion.
    - *Korah son of Izhar (a Levite) …and certain Reubenites - Dathan and Abiram… became insolent and rose up against Moses. With them were 250 Israelite men, well-known community leaders who had been appointed members of the council. They came as a group to oppose Moses and Aaron and said to them, "You have gone too far! The whole community is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is with them. Why then do you set yourselves above the LORD's assembly?"* (vv. 1-3)
    - *When Moses heard this, he fell facedown. Then he said to Korah and all his followers: "In the morning the LORD will show who belongs to him and who is holy… You, Korah, and all your followers are to do this: Take censers and tomorrow put burning coals and incense in them before the LORD. The man the LORD chooses will be the one who is holy. You Levites have gone too far!"* (vv. 4-7)
    - *Then the LORD said to Moses, "Say to the assembly, 'Move away from the tents of Korah, Dathan and Abiram.'"* (vv. 23-24)
    - *…the ground under them split apart and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them and their households, and all those associated with Korah, together with their possessions… And fire came out from the LORD and consumed the 250 men who were offering the incense.* (vv. 31-32, 35).
  - Chapter 17 - Aaron's staff blossoms and produces almonds to signify his place as God's chosen – the staff is placed in front of the Ark of the Covenant as a permanent sign to anyone else who considered rebellion.
  - Chapter 18 – additional instructions for the priesthood and the Levites.
  - Chapter 19 – cleansing water.
  - Chapter 20
    - Miriam died and was buried at Kadesh.
    - Moses disobeyed and was told, *"Because you did not trust be enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them"* (v. 12).
    - The Edomites refused to give Israel safe passage.

        - Eleazar was chosen to succeed Aaron and Aaron died.
- The New Generation (Chapters 21–36).
    - Chapter 21
        - The king of Arad attacked the Israelites and was destroyed (vv. 1-3).
        - The Bronze Snake – The Israelites spoke against God and Moses and God sent venomous snakes that killed many of them. Under God's instruction, Moses made a bronze snake and put it on a pole so that anyone who was bitten could look at it and live. (vv. 4-9)
        - The Israelites traveled from Kadesh to Moab, defeated Sihon and Og.
    - Chapters 22-24 – Balaam.
        - Balaam was not a prophet of God, but part of a cult of diviners and seers who consulted spirits and were known to give blessings and curses.
        - Balak, king of Moab summoned Balaam. *But God said to Balaam, "Do not go with them. You must not put a curse on those people, because they are blessed."* (v. 12). Balaam told the king's messengers he would not go with them.
        - *That night God came to Balaam and said, "Since these men have come to summon you, go with them, but do only what I tell you."* (v. 20)
        - The donkey speaks. *The angel of the LORD said to Balaam, "Go with the men, but speak only what I tell you." So Balaam went with Balak's officials.* (v. 35)
        - Through a series of seven messages from God, Balaam blessed the Israelites.
    - Chapter 25 – the Moabite seduction.
    - Chapter 26 – The Second Census.
    - Chapter 27 – Joshua is chosen to succeed Moses.
    - Chapters 28-30 – Additional instructions.
    - Chapter 31 – Midian is conquered.
    - Chapter 32 – Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh were allotted land west of the Jordan River.
    - Chapter 33 – An account of the trip of Egypt to Canaan.
    - Chapter 34 – The boundaries of Canaan.
    - Chapter 25 – Towns for the Levites and Cities of Refuge.
    - Chapter 36 – Instructions for daughters who inherit land.

THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL

Original	Entering Canaan
Reuben	Reuben
Simeon	Simeon
Levi – *became the priestly tribe, not counted among the twelve*	
Judah	Judah
Dan	Dan
Naphtali	Naphtali
Gad	Gad
Asher	Asher
Issachar	Issachar
Zebulon	Zebulon
Joseph – *became two tribes through his sons*	Ephraim
	Manasseh
Benjamin	Benjamin

NEXT WEEK: Read the Book of Deuteronomy.



Lesson 6

Deuteronomy

- This book is essentially Moses' farewell address to the Israelites, given in a series of three speeches in which he recapped their history and warned them against further sin.
- This is the last book of the Pentateuch, the final book of Moses.
- The five books of Moses:
    - Genesis – Beginnings.
    - Exodus – Redemption.
    - Leviticus – Worship.
    - Numbers – Transition.
    - Deuteronomy – Arriving.
- Deuteronomy gets its name from the Greek, *deuteros* - "second," and *nomos* - "law." This is a second giving of the law, or a new explanation of it to the new generation of Israel who had grown up in the wilderness.
- The basic theme of Deuteronomy is obedience.
- It is also a book of transitions:
    - The final transition to a new generation.
    - The transition to a new possession.
    - The transition to a new experience.
    - The transition to a new revelation of God – a God of love.
        - *Because he loved your ancestors and chose their descendants after them, he brought you out of Egypt by his Presence and his great strength, to drive out before you nations greater and stronger than you and to bring you into their land to give it to you for your inheritance, as it is today* (4:37).
        - *The LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt (7:7-8).*
        - *To the LORD your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it. Yet the LORD set his affection on your ancestors and loved them, and he chose you, their descendants, above all the nations—as it is today* (10:15).

OUTLINE

- Looking Back (Chapters 1–11).
    - Moses gives a brief history of the time since Israel arrived at the Promised Land (1-3).
        - God told Israel it was time to enter the Promised Land (1:3-8).
        - Moses appointed leaders (1:9-18).

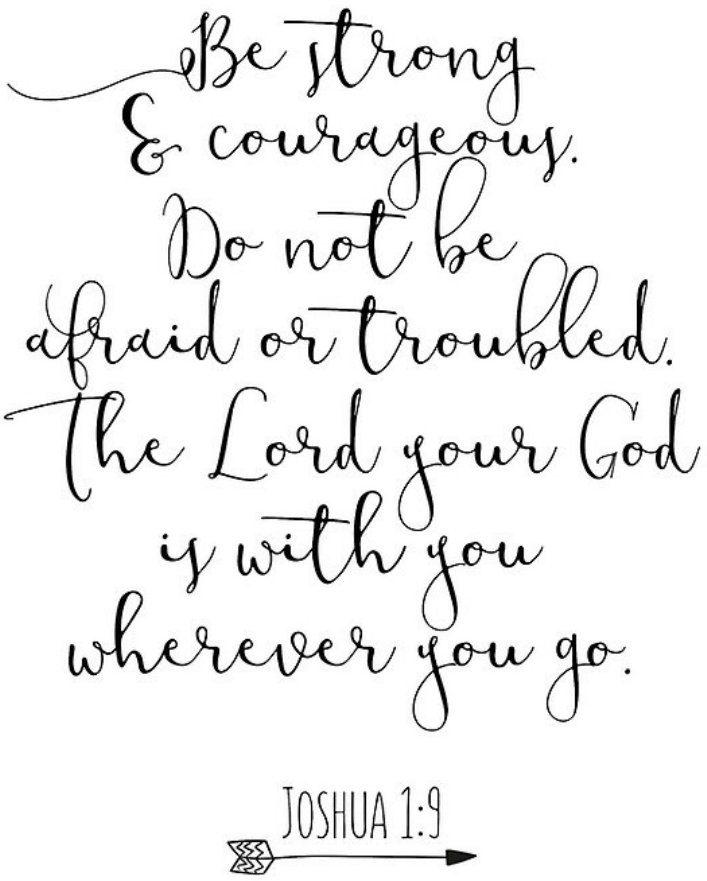
    - Spies were sent into Canaan (1:19-25).
    - Israel rebelled and refused to enter the land (1:26-46).
    - Israel wandered in the wilderness, waiting for the rebellious generation to doe (2:1-23).
    - Israel defeated King Sihon the Amorite (2:24-37).
    - Israel defeated Og, king of Bashan (3:1-11).
    - Moses gave Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh the land they requested in exchange for their pledge to help the rest of Israel conquer the land (3:12-20).
    - Moses was punished and forbidden to enter the Promised Land. He appointed Joshua his successor (3:21-29; 31:1-8).
    - Moses warned Israel about the consequences for disobedience (4).
- The Ten Commandments (5).
    - You shall have no other gods before me (5:7).
    - You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them… (5:8-9).
    - You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God,,, (5:11).
    - Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy… (5:12).
    - Honor your father and your mother… (5:16).
    - You shall not murder (5:17).
    - You shall not commit adultery (5:18).
    - You shall not steal (5:19)
    - You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor (5:20).
    - You shall not covet… (5:21).
- The *Shema - Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength* (6:4-5).
    - This is considered the central doctrine of the Jewish faith.
    - Jesus quoted the Shema, *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind* (ref. Deuteronomy 6:5) and *Love your neighbor as yourself.* (ref. Leviticus 19:18) *All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments"* (Matthew 22:37-40).
    - In addition, Moses told the Israelites to remember the Law. *These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.* (6:4-9)

- Instructions for conquering the Promised Land (7).
    - *…destroy them totally…*
    - *…Make no treaty with them…*
    - *…show no mercy.*
    - *Do not intermarry with them…*
    - *Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones, cut down their Asherah poles, and burn their idols in the fire.*
    - *Do not be afraid…*
    - Moses warned Israel to love and obey the Lord (7-11).
        - *See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse—the blessing if you obey the commands of the LORD your God that I am giving you today; the curse if you disobey the commands of the LORD your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other gods, which you have not known.* (11:26-28)
        - *You are about to cross the Jordan to enter and take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you. When you have taken it over and are living there, be sure that you obey all the decrees and laws I am setting before you today.* (11:31-32)
- Looking Forward (Chapters 12–34)
    - Moses warned the Israelites to be careful and specific in obeying God.
        - Worship in the way God has told you and only in the way God has told you (12-13; 17:1-7).
        - Clean and unclean food (14:1-21).
        - Return a *tithe* (a tenth) to God (14:22-29; 26:1-15).
        - Debts are cancelled and servants are freed after seven years (15:1-18).
        - Firstborn cows and sheep belong to God (15:19-23).
        - Observe Passover, as well as the Festival of Weeks and the Festival of Tabernacles (16:1-17).
        - Every tribe is to appoint judges (16:18-20). If they cannot reach a decision go to the Levitical priests (17:8-12).
        - Let the Lord choose your king (17:14-16) and *When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the Levitical priests. It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees and not consider himself better than his fellow Israelites and turn from the law to the right or to the left. Then he and his descendants will reign a long time over his kingdom in Israel.* (17:18-20)
        - Allotments and offerings for the priests (18:1-8).

    - *Do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. Let no one be found among you who sacrifices their son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD…"* (18:9-13).
    - Listen to the prophets, but make sure they are from God (18:14-22).
    - Establish cities of refuge to ensure justice is served (19:1-14).
    - *A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses* (19:25).
    - Rules for war (20).
    - Atonement for unsolved murders (21:1-9).
    - Marrying a captive woman (21:10-14).
    - The right of the firstborn son (21:15-17).
    - Rebellious sons (21:18-21).
    - Various laws (21:22-22:12; 23:15-25:19).
    - Marriage laws (22:13-30).
    - Exclusion from the assembly (23:1-8).
    - Uncleanness (23:9-14).
- Blessings and curses at Mount Ebal (27:12-28:68).
- Renewal of the Covenant (29).
- Additional warnings (30).
- God told Moses, *"You are going to rest with your ancestors, and these people will soon prostitute themselves to the foreign gods of the land they are entering. They will forsake me and break the covenant I made with them. And in that day I will become angry with them and forsake them; I will hide my face from them, and they will be destroyed. Many disasters and calamities will come on them, and in that day they will ask, 'Have not these disasters come on us because our God is not with us?' And I will certainly hide my face in that day because of all their wickedness in turning to other gods. "Now write down this song and teach it to the Israelites and have them sing it, so that it may be a witness for me against them. When I have brought them into the land flowing with milk and honey, the land I promised on oath to their ancestors, and when they eat their fill and thrive, they will turn to other gods and worship them, rejecting me and breaking my covenant. And when many disasters and calamities come on them, this song will testify against them, because it will not be forgotten by their descendants. I know what they are disposed to do, even before I bring them into the land I promised them on oath."* (31:16-21)
- The song of Moses (32).
- Moses blesses the Israelites (33).

- The death of Moses (34). *And Moses the servant of the LORD died there in Moab, as the LORD had said. He buried him in Moab, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, but to this day no one knows where his grave is.* (34:5-6)

NEXT WEEK: Read the book of Joshua.



Lesson 7

JOSHUA

- The Pentateuch (Genesis through Deuteronomy) told the story of the Children of Israel from their Egyptian slavery up to their arrival at the land of Canaan. The Book of Joshua takes the narrative into Canaan. The historical books from Joshua through Esther cover Israel's history inside the Promised Land.
- The author of this book is Joshua. If he did not write it by his own hand scholars believe he dictated the words to a Scribe who wrote them down.
- The name, Joshua means, "Jehovah is Salvation."
- The Structure of Joshua.
    - Part 1: Entering the Land (Chapters 1–5).
    - Part 2: Overcoming the Land (Chapters 6–12).
    - Part 3: Occupying the Land (Chapters 13–24).
- The central theme of Joshua is the victory of faith.

OUTLINE

- Entering the Land (Chapters 1-5).
    - God commissioned God for leadership (c. 1).

        After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: "Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites. I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them.

        "Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." (vv. 1-9)

        - The past is in the past - *"Moses my servant is dead."* (v. 2)
        - *...get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land...* (v. 2)
        - *No one will be able to stand against you...* (v. 5)
        - *I will never leave you nor forsake you.* (v. 5) *...the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."* (v. 9)

- *Be strong and courageous…* (vv. 6, 7, 9)
- *Do not be afraid, do not be discouraged…* (v. 9)

* Joshua sent two spies into Jericho because it was a key city.

...Joshua ...sent two spies… "Go, look over the land… especially Jericho." So they went and entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there.

The king of Jericho was told, "...some of the Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land." So the king… sent this message to Rahab: "Bring out the men who came to you and entered your house…"

But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. She said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they had come from. At dusk, when it was time to close the city gate, they left. I don't know which way they went… (But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them under the stalks of flax she had laid out on the roof.) So the men set out in pursuit of the spies… as soon as the pursuers had gone out, the gate was shut.

Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof and said to them, "I know that the Lord has given you this land and… all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you… and what you did to Sihon and Og…

"Now then, please swear to me by the Lord that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you… spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them…

"If you don't tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the Lord gives us the land."

So she let them down by a rope through the window, for the house she lived in was part of the city wall. "Go to the hills so the pursuers will not find you. Hide yourselves there three days until they return…

...the men had said to her, "This oath you made us swear will not be binding on us unless, when we enter the land, you have tied this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you have brought your [family] into your house... But if you tell what we are doing, we will be released from the oath you made us swear."

"Agreed," she replied... And she tied the scarlet cord in the window. (vv. 1-21)

*NOTE: Rahab's story does not end here!

- *"By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the army had marched around them for seven days. By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient"* (Hebrews 11:30-31).
- *"In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging*

to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead" (James 2:25-26)..

- *This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham: Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar, Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, Ram the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of King David. David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife…* (Matthew 1:1-6)

- Crossing the Jordan River (c. 3).
  - NOTE: This is the same place the first generation of Israelites had been 40 years earlier when they refused to go in (Numbers 14).
  - *So when the people broke camp to cross the Jordan, the priests carrying the ark of the covenant went ahead of them. Now the Jordan is at flood stage all during harvest. Yet as soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water's edge, the water from upstream stopped flowing… The priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord stopped in the middle of the Jordan and stood on dry ground, while all Israel passed by until the whole nation had completed the crossing on dry ground.* (vv. 14-17)
- Building a memorial (c. 4).
  - While the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant continued standing in the middle of the Jordan River a man from each of the 12 tribes took a large stone from the riverbed and used them to build a memorial on the bank so that future generations would know what God did that day.
  - Only after the memorial was built did the priests come out of the riverbed and the water returned to its place.
- The Covenant is renewed at Gilgal (c. 5).

- Overcoming the Land. (Chapters 6-12).
  - The fall of Jericho (5:13-6:27).
    - An angel was sent to Joshua.

      Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?"

      "Neither," he replied, "but as commander of the army of the Lord I have now come."

Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, "What message does my Lord have for his servant?"

The commander of the Lord's army replied, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so. (5:13-15)

- God gave Joshua specific, but strange instructions. *"March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams' horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have the whole army give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse and the army will go up, everyone straight in."* (vv. 3-5)
- The Israelites followed God's instructions.
    - Jericho fell.
    - Rahab and all her family were spared.
    - Everything was destroyed, but the silver, gold, bronze, and iron was placed in the *treasury of God's house.*

- The sin of Achan (cc. 7-8).
    - When Israel attempted to conquer Ai they were routed.
    - Joshua prayed and God told him *"Israel has sinned… They have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, they have lied, they have put them with their own possessions. That is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies… I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction"* (vv. 11-12).
    - Achan of the Tribe of Judah confessed after an excruciating trial that involved standing before God as tribes, then clans, then families, then individuals. He had buried a robe, 200 shekels of silver, and a bar of gold inside his tent.
    - Achan and his family were stoned.
    - The Israelites lured the army of Ai out and then destroyed the city and everyone in it before killing the entire army, as well as the king.
    - Joshua built an altar at Mount Ebal and Israel renewed the Covenant there.
- The Gibeonites trick the Israelites into a treaty (c. 9).
- The Amorites are defeated (c. 10).
    - The king of Jerusalem formed an alliance of five Amorite kings and attacked Gibeon.
    - Joshua and the Israelites marched all night and took the Amorites by surprise. Israel achieved a convincing victory with God intervening in two ways:

        - He lengthened the day so the battle could continue.
        - He attacked the Amorites with *large hailstones.*
      - From there the Israelites conquered the rest of southern cities of Canaan (vv. 28-43).
    - The northern cities are defeated (c. 11).
    - A list of defeated kings in Canaan - 31 in all (c. 12).
- Occupying the land (Chapters 13-24).
    - God instructed Joshua to allocate the land to the tribes, including land that had yet to be conquered because *I myself will drive them out before the Israelites.* (13:6)
    - The tribes of Reuben and Gad, along with the half tribe of Manasseh were given land *east of the Jordan* according to their agreement with Moses. (13:8-32)
    - The land west of the Jordan was divided by *Eleazar… Joshua… and the heads of the tribal clans… by lot* (14:1-2).
    - The Levites were not given a share of the land as a tribe, but were given cities in each of the other tribal lands. (14:4)
    - Caleb of the tribe of Judah was given Hebron because Moses promised it to him for being the only other spy besides Joshua who kept the faith when the first generation of Israelites refused to enter Canaan.

      "So on that day Moses swore to me, 'The land on which your feet have walked will be your inheritance and that of your children forever, because you have followed the Lord my God wholeheartedly.'

      "Now then, just as the Lord promised, he has kept me alive for forty-five years since the time he said this to Moses, while Israel moved about in the wilderness. So here I am today, eighty-five years old! I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out; I'm just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then. Now give me this hill country that the Lord promised me that day. You yourself heard then that the Anakites were there and their cities were large and fortified, but, the Lord helping me, I will drive them out just as he said." (14:9-12)
    - Judah's allotment (c. 15).
    - Ephraim and Manasseh's (Joseph) allotment (cc. 16-17).

      The people of Joseph said to Joshua, "Why have you given us only one allotment and one portion for an inheritance? We are a numerous people, and the Lord has blessed us abundantly."

      "If you are so numerous," Joshua answered, "and if the hill country of Ephraim is too small for you, go up into the forest and clear land for yourselves there in the land of the Perizzites and Rephaites."

      The people of Joseph replied, "The hill country is not enough for us, and all the Canaanites who live in the plain have chariots fitted with iron, both those in Beth Shan and its settlements and those in the Valley of Jezreel."

But Joshua said to the tribes of Joseph—to Ephraim and Manasseh—"You are numerous and very powerful. You will have not only one allotment but the forested hill country as well. Clear it, and its farthest limits will be yours; though the Canaanites have chariots fitted with iron and though they are strong, you can drive them out." (17:14-18).

- Benjamin's allotment (c. 18).
- Simeon's allotment (19:1-9).
- Zebulun's allotment (19:10-16).
- Issachar's allotment (19:17-23).
- Asher's allotment (19:24-31).
- Naphtali's allotment (19:32-39).
- Dan's allotment (19:40-48).
- Joshua was given the town of Timnath Serah (19:49-51)
- Six cities of refuge were established (c. 20).
- Cities for the Levites, as well as pastureland (c. 21).
- The tribes of Reuben and Gad, along with the half tribe of Manasseh, were released from their promise to Moses and allowed to claim their land east of the Jordan River (c. 22).
- Joshua's farewell address (cc. 23-24)
  "Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." (24:14-15)
- Epilogue (c. 24)
  - *Joshua… died at the age of a hundred and ten. And they buried him in the land of his inheritance, at Timnath Serah in the hill country of Ephraim…* (24:29-30).
  - *Israel served the Lord throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had experienced everything the Lord had done for Israel.* (24:31)
  - *Joseph's bones, which the Israelites had brought up from Egypt, were buried at Shechem… (24:32).*
  - Eleazar son of Aaron died and was buried at Gibeah… (24:33).

* By the time Joshua 24:31-33 was added to Joshua's account it is likely Caleb had also died, bringing to an end the entire first generation of Israelites.

Next Week: Read the Books of Judges and Ruth.

Lesson 8

JUDGES

- The book of Judges takes its name from its contents—the stories of people raised up as judges to deliver Israel in a time of decline and disunion after the death of Joshua.
- The nature of the book places emphasis on the spiritual significance of events recorded and not on chronological continuity.
- The author of the book is not named, though Jewish tradition attributes it to Samuel.
- Central Message: Failure Through Compromise.
    - Paul wrote, *"As God has said: 'I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people. Therefore, Come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty'"* (2 Corinthians 6:16-18).
    - But, *"In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit"* (Judges 17:6).

OUTLINE

- Prologue (Chapters 1-2)
    - Though the land was given by God, and conquered under and divided by Joshua, it was still necessary for each tribe to fight to displace the Canaanites yet remaining.
    - The LORD gave victories to the tribes of Judah, Simeon, Ephraim, and Manasseh, as well as Caleb's people as they fought and displaced the Canaanites.
    - However (1:27-36):
        - *Manasseh did not drive out the people of Beth Shan or Taanach or Dor or Ibleam or Megiddo… they pressed the Canaanites into forced labor but never drove them out completely.*
        - *Nor did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites living in Gezer, but the Canaanites continued to live there among them.*
        - *Neither did Zebulun drive out the Canaanites living in Kitron or Nahalol, so these Canaanites lived among them, but Zebulun did subject them to forced labor.*
        - *Nor did Asher drive out those living in Akko or Sidon or Ahlab or Akzib or Helbah or Aphek or Rehob. The Asherites lived among the Canaanite inhabitants of the land because they did not drive them out.*
        - *Neither did Naphtali drive out those living in Beth Shemesh or Beth Anath; but the Naphtalites too lived among the Canaanite inhabitants of the land, and*

those living in Beth Shemesh and Beth Anath became forced laborers for them.
    - *The Amorites confined the Danites to the hill country, not allowing them to come down into the plain… they too were pressed into forced labor.*
- *"After that whole generation had been gathered to their ancestors, another generation grew up who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel. Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD and served the Baals. They forsook the LORD, the God of their ancestors, who had brought them out of Egypt. They followed and worshiped various gods of the peoples around them"* (2:10-12).
- *"Then the LORD raised up judges, who saved them out of the hands of these raiders. Yet they would not listen to their judges but prostituted themselves to other gods and worshiped them... Whenever the LORD raised up a judge for them, he was with the judge and saved them out of the hands of their enemies as long as the judge lived… But when the judge died, the people returned to ways even more corrupt than those of their ancestors, following other gods and serving and worshiping them. They refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways"* (2:16-19).

- The Judges (Chapters 3-16).
  *Notice the pattern: sin – suffering – supplication – salvation.
  - Othniel (3:7-11).
    - *The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD; they forgot the LORD their God and served the Baals and the Asherahs* (v. 7).
    - *The anger of the LORD burned against Israel so that he sold them into the hands of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Aram Naharaim, to whom the Israelites were subject for eight years* (v. 8).
    - *But when they cried out to the LORD, he raised up for them a deliverer, Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, who saved them* (v. 9).
    - *So, the land had peace for forty years, until Othniel son of Kenaz died* (v. 11).
  - Ehud (3:12-30).
    - *Again, the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and because they did this evil the LORD gave Eglon king of Moab power over Israel* (v. 12).
    - *Again, the Israelites cried out to the LORD, and he gave them a deliverer—Ehud, a left-handed man… The Israelites sent him with tribute to Eglon, king of Moab... Ehud made a double-edged sword about a cubit long, which he strapped to his right thigh under his clothing. He presented the tribute to Eglon king*

of Moab, who was a very fat man... he …said, "Your Majesty, I have a secret message for you." The king said to his attendants, "Leave us!"…Ehud then approached him while he was sitting alone… "I have a message from God for you." …Ehud reached with his left hand, drew the sword from his right thigh and plunged it into the king's belly. Even the handle sank in after the blade, and his bowels discharged. Ehud did not pull the sword out, and the fat closed in over it (vv. 15-22).

- Shamgar (3:31).
  After Ehud came Shamgar son of Anath, who struck down six hundred Philistines with an oxgoad. He too saved Israel.
- Deborah (4-5).
  - *Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, now that Ehud was dead. So the LORD sold them into the hands of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. Sisera, the commander of his army, was based in Harosheth Haggoyim. Because he had nine hundred chariots fitted with iron and had cruelly oppressed the Israelites for twenty years, they cried to the LORD for help* (4:1-3).
  - *Now Deborah, a prophet… held court.. between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites went up to her to have their disputes decided. She sent for Barak… and said to him, "The LORD, the God of Israel, commands you: 'Go, take with you ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun and lead them up to Mount Tabor. I will lead Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his troops to the Kishon River and give him into your hands.' Barak said to her, "If you go with me, I will go; but if you don't go with me, I won't go." " I will go with you," said Deborah. "But because of the course you are taking, the honor will not be yours, for the LORD will deliver Sisera into the hands of a woman."* (4:4-9).
  - *So, Barak went down Mount Tabor, with ten thousand men following him… the LORD routed Sisera and all his chariots and army by the sword… Sisera… fled on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite… Jael went out to meet Sisera and said to him, "Come, my lord, come right in. Don't be afraid." …and she covered him with a blanket... "Stand in the doorway of the tent," he told her. "If someone comes by and asks you, 'Is anyone in*

there?' say 'No.'" But Jael… picked up a tent peg and a hammer and went quietly to him while he lay fast asleep, exhausted. She drove the peg through his temple into the ground, and he died… And the hand of the Israelites pressed harder and harder against Jabin king of Canaan until they destroyed him (4:14-24).

- Gideon (6-9).
  - *The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites* (6:1). *When the Israelites cried out to the LORD because of Midian, he sent them a prophet, who said… you have not listened to me"* (6:7-10).
  - *The angel of the LORD… appeared to Gideon… "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior." "Pardon me, my lord," Gideon replied, "but if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us?" The LORD turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?" "Pardon me, my lord," Gideon replied, "but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family." The LORD answered, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites, leaving none alive." Gideon replied, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, give me a sign that it is really you talking to me. Please do not go away until I come back and bring my offering and set it before you."*
    …Gideon went inside, prepared a young goat, and from an ephah of flour he made bread without yeast. Putting the meat in a basket and its broth in a pot, he brought them out and offered them to him under the oak. The angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread, place them on this rock, and pour out the broth." And Gideon did so. Then the angel of the LORD touched the meat and the unleavened bread with the tip of the staff that was in his hand. Fire flared from the rock, consuming the meat and the bread. And the angel of the LORD disappeared.
    …That same night the LORD said to him, "Take the second bull from your father's herd… Tear down your father's altar to Baal and cut down the Asherah pole beside it. Then build a proper kind of altar to the LORD your God on the top… Using the wood of the Asherah pole that you cut down, offer the second bull as a burnt offering." So, Gideon took ten of his

servants and did as the LORD told him... In the morning when the people of the town got up, there was Baal's altar, demolished, with the Asherah pole beside it cut down and the second bull sacrificed on the newly built altar! …When they carefully investigated, they were told, "Gideon son of Joash did it." The people of the town demanded of Joash, "Bring out your son. He must die… But Joash replied… "Are you going to plead Baal's cause? Are you trying to save him? …If Baal really is a god, he can defend himself… So, because Gideon broke down Baal's altar, they gave him the name Jerub-Baal that day, saying, "Let Baal contend with him."
…Then the Spirit of the LORD came on Gideon, and [summoned] …the Abiezrites to follow him. He sent messengers throughout Manasseh… Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali… Gideon said to God, "If you will save Israel by my hand as you have promised—look, I will place a wool fleece on the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the fleece and all the ground is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you said." And that is what happened... Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me. Let me make just one more request. Allow me one more test with the fleece, but this time make the fleece dry and let the ground be covered with dew." That night God did so. Only the fleece was dry; all the ground was covered with dew (6:11-40).

- *…The LORD said to Gideon, "You have too many men. I cannot deliver Midian into their hands, or Israel would boast against me… Now announce to the army, 'Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.' " So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained.*
But the LORD said to Gideon, "There are still too many men... So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the LORD told him, "Separate those who lap the water with their tongues as a dog laps from those who kneel down to drink." Three hundred of them drank from cupped hands, lapping like dogs. All the rest got down on their knees to drink. The LORD said to Gideon, "With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the others go home."
…During that night the LORD said to Gideon, "Get up, go down against the camp, because I am going to give it into your hands. If you are afraid to attack, go

down to the camp with your servant Purah and listen to what they are saying. Afterward, you will be encouraged to attack the camp." So he and Purah his servant went down to the outposts of the camp... Gideon arrived just as a man was telling a friend his dream... "God has given the Midianites and the whole camp into his hands." When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, he bowed down and worshiped.

...Dividing the three hundred men into three companies, he placed trumpets and empty jars in the hands of all of them, with torches inside... Gideon and the hundred men with him reached the edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just after they had changed the guard. They blew their trumpets and broke the jars that were in their hands… Grasping the torches in their left hands and holding in their right hands the trumpets they were to blow, they shouted, "A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!" While each man held his position around the camp, all the Midianites ran, crying out as they fled. When the three hundred trumpets sounded, the LORD caused the men throughout the camp to turn on each other with their swords. The army fled… So, all the men of Ephraim were called out… They pursued the Midianites and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon, who was by the Jordan (7:1-25).

- *The Israelites said to Gideon, "Rule over us—you, your son and your grandson—because you have saved us from the hand of Midian." But Gideon told them, "I will not rule over you, nor will my son rule over you. The LORD will rule over you."*

  "I do have one request, that each of you give me an earring from your share of the plunder." ...So, they spread out a garment, and each of them threw a ring from his plunder onto it. The weight of the gold rings he asked for came to seventeen hundred shekels (about 40lbs)… *Gideon made the gold into an ephod, which he placed in Ophrah, his town. All Israel prostituted themselves by worshiping it there, and it became a snare to Gideon and his family* (8:22-27).
- *Jerub-Baal* (Gideon)… *went back home to live. He had seventy sons of his own, for he had many wives. His concubine, who lived in Shechem, also bore him a son, whom he named Abimelek. Gideon… died at a good old age and was buried in the tomb of his father Joash in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.*

No sooner had Gideon died than the Israelites again prostituted themselves to the Baals. They set up Baal-Berith as their god and did not remember the LORD their God, who had rescued them from the hands of all their enemies on every side. They also failed to show any loyalty to the family of Jerub-Baal (Gideon) *in spite of all the good things he had done for them* (8:29-35).

- *Abimelek son of Jerub-Baal* (Gideon) *went to his mother's brothers in Shechem and said to them and to all his mother's clan, "Ask all the citizens of Shechem, 'Which is better for you: to have all seventy of Jerub-Baal's sons rule over you, or just one man?' Remember, I am your flesh and blood." When the brothers repeated all this to the citizens of Shechem, they were inclined to follow Abimelek, for they said, "He is related to us." They gave him seventy shekels of silver from the temple of Baal-Berith, and Abimelek used it to hire reckless scoundrels, who became his followers. He went to his father's home in Ophrah and on one stone murdered his seventy brothers, the sons of Jerub-Baal. But Jotham, the youngest son… escaped… Then all the citizens of Shechem and Beth Millo gathered beside the great tree at the pillar in Shechem to crown Abimelek king* (9:1-6).
  After Abimelek had governed… three years, God stirred up animosity between Abimelek and the citizens of Shechem… God did this in order that the crime against Jerub-Baal's seventy sons… might be avenged… Gaal son of Ebed moved with his clan into Shechem, and its citizens put their confidence in him... Ebed said, "Who is Abimelek, and why should we… be subject to him? …If only this people were under my command! Then I would get rid of him... So Abimelek and all his troops set out by night and took up concealed positions near Shechem… So Gaal led out the citizens of Shechem and fought Abimelek... Zebul drove Gaal and his clan out of Shechem... Abimelek pressed his attack against the city until he had captured it and killed its people. Then he destroyed the city and scattered salt over it… the citizens in the tower of Shechem went into the stronghold of the temple of El-Berith... So, all the men cut branches and… piled them against the stronghold and set it on fire with the people still inside... all the people… about a thousand men and women… died.

Next Abimelek went to Thebez and… captured it. Inside the city… was a strong tower, to which all the men and women… had fled… Abimelek went to the tower and attacked it. But as he approached the entrance to the tower to set it on fire, a woman dropped an upper millstone on his head and cracked his skull. Hurriedly he called to his armor-bearer, "Draw your sword and kill me, so that they can't say, 'A woman killed him.'" So, his servant ran him through, and he died. When the Israelites saw that Abimelek was dead, they went home... (9:22-57).

- Tola (10:1-2).
  After the time of Abimelek, a man of Issachar named Tola son of Puah, the son of Dodo, rose to save Israel. He lived in Shamir, in the hill country of Ephraim. He led Israel twenty-three years; then he died and was buried in Shamir.
- Jair (10:3-5).
  Jair of Gilead… led Israel twenty-two years. He had thirty sons, who rode thirty donkeys. They controlled thirty towns in Gilead… When Jair died, he was buried in Kamon.
- Jephthah (11-12)
  - Background: *Again, the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD. They served the Baals and the Ashtoreths… because the Israelites forsook the LORD and no longer served him, he became angry with them. He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and the Ammonites, who that year shattered and crushed them. For eighteen years they oppressed all the Israelites on the east side of the Jordan in Gilead… Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD, "We have sinned against you, forsaking our God and serving the Baals." The LORD replied, "When the Egyptians, the Amorites, the Ammonites, the Philistines, the Sidonians, the Amalekites and the Maonites oppressed you and you cried to me for help, did I not save you from their hands? But you have forsaken me and served other gods, so I will no longer save you. Go and cry out to the gods you have chosen. Let them save you when you are in trouble!"* (10:6-14)
  - *Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty warrior. His father was Gilead; his mother was a prostitute. Gilead's wife also bore him sons, and when they were grown up, they drove Jephthah away. "You are not going to get any inheritance in our family," they said, "because you are the son of another woman." So, Jephthah fled from his brothers and settled in the land of Tob, where a gang of scoundrels gathered*

around him and followed him (11:1-3).

- *Sometime later, when the Ammonites were fighting against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to get Jephthah… "Come," they said, "be our commander, so we can fight the Ammonites." Jephthah said to them, "Didn't you hate me and drive me from my father's house? Why do you come to me now when you're in trouble?" The elders of Gilead said to him, "…come with us to fight the Ammonites, and you will be head over all of us who live in Gilead." Jephthah answered, "Suppose you take me back to fight the Ammonites and the LORD gives them to me—will I really be your head?" The elders of Gilead replied, "The LORD is our witness; we will certainly do as you say."* (11:4-10)
  Then the Spirit of the LORD came on Jephthah… Jephthah made a vow to the LORD: "If you give the Ammonites into my hands, whatever comes out of the door of my house to meet me when I return in triumph from the Ammonites will be the LORD's, and I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering." Then Jephthah went over to fight the Ammonites, and the LORD gave them into his hands... When Jephthah returned to his home in Mizpah, who should come out to meet him but his daughter, dancing to the sound of timbrels! She was an only child. Except for her he had neither son nor daughter. When he saw her, he tore his clothes and cried, "Oh no, my daughter! You have brought me down and I am devastated. I have made a vow to the LORD that I cannot break." "My father," she replied, "you have given your word to the LORD. Do to me just as you promised… But grant me this one request," she said. "Give me two months to roam the hills and weep with my friends, because I will never marry." …And he let her go for two months. She and her friends went into the hills and wept because she would never marry. After the two months, she returned to her father, and he did to her as he had vowed... (11:29-39)

- Ibzan (12:8-10).
  After him, Ibzan of Bethlehem led Israel. He had thirty sons and thirty daughters. He gave his daughters away in marriage to those outside his clan, and for his sons he brought in thirty young women as wives from outside his clan. Ibzan led Israel seven years. Then Ibzan died and was buried in Bethlehem.

- Elon (12:11-12).
  After him, Elon the Zebulunite led Israel ten years. Then Elon died and was buried in Aijalon in the land of Zebulun.
- Abdon (12:13-15).
  After him, Abdon son of Hillel, from Pirathon, led Israel. He had forty sons and thirty grandsons, who rode on seventy donkeys. He led Israel eight years. Then Abdon son of Hillel died and was buried at Pirathon in Ephraim, in the hill country of the Amalekites.
- Samson (13-16).
  - *Again, the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, so the LORD delivered them into the hands of the Philistines for forty years.* (13:1)
  - *A certain man of Zorah, named Manoah, from the clan of the Danites, had a wife who was childless, unable to give birth. The angel of the LORD appeared to her and said, "You are barren and childless, but you are going to become pregnant and give birth to a son. Now see to it that you drink no wine or other fermented drink and that you do not eat anything unclean. You will become pregnant and have a son whose head is never to be touched by a razor because the boy is to be a Nazirite, dedicated to God from the womb. He will take the lead in delivering Israel from the hands of the Philistines."* (13:2-5)
  - *Samson went down to Timnah and saw there a young Philistine woman. When he returned, he said to his father and mother, "I have seen a Philistine woman in Timnah; now get her for me as my wife." His father and mother replied, "Isn't there an acceptable woman among your relatives or among all our people? Must you go to the uncircumcised Philistines to get a wife?" But Samson said to his father, "Get her for me. She's the right one for me." ...Samson went down to Timnah together with his father and mother. As they approached the vineyards of Timnah, suddenly a young lion came roaring toward him. The Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon him so that he tore the lion apart with his bare hands as he might have torn a young goat... Then he went down and talked with the woman, and he liked her. Sometime later, when he went back to marry her, he turned aside to look at the lion's carcass, and in it he saw a swarm of bees and some honey. He scooped out the honey with his hands and ate as he went along. When he rejoined his parents, he gave them some, and they too ate it. But he did not tell them that he had taken*

the honey from the lion's carcass. (14:1-9)

- *…Samson held a feast, as was customary for young men. When the people saw him, they chose thirty men to be his companions. "Let me tell you a riddle," Samson said to them. "If you can give me the answer within the seven days of the feast, I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty sets of clothes. If you can't tell me the answer, you must give me thirty linen garments and thirty sets of clothes." "Tell us your riddle," they said. "Let's hear it." He replied, "Out of the eater, something to eat; out of the strong, something sweet." For three days they could not give the answer. On the fourth day, they said to Samson's wife, "Coax your husband into explaining the riddle for us, or we will burn you and your father's household to death... on the seventh day he finally told her, because she continued to press him. She in turn explained the riddle to her people. Before sunset on the seventh day the men of the town said to him, "What is sweeter than honey? What is stronger than a lion?" ... He went down to Ashkelon, struck down thirty of their men, stripped them of everything and gave their clothes to those who had explained the riddle. Burning with anger, he returned to his father's home. And Samson's wife was given to one of his companions…* (14:10-20)
- *…Samson took a young goat and went to visit his wife... But her father would not let him go in. "I was so sure you hated her," he said, "that I gave her to your companion..." So, he went out and caught three hundred foxes and tied them tail to tail in pairs. He then fastened a torch to every pair of tails, lit the torches and let the foxes loose in the standing grain of the Philistines... So, the Philistines went up and burned her and her father to death… He attacked them viciously and slaughtered many of them... Then three thousand men from Judah… said to Samson, "Don't you realize that the Philistines are rulers over us? …We've come to tie you up and hand you over to the Philistines." So, they bound him with two new ropes and led him up from the rock. As he approached Lehi, the Philistines came toward him… The ropes on his arms became like charred flax, and the bindings dropped from his hands. Finding a fresh jawbone of a donkey, he grabbed it and struck down a thousand men.* (15:1-15)

- *One day Samson went to Gaza, where he saw a prostitute. He went in to spend the night with her. The people of Gaza… surrounded the place and lay in wait for him… But Samson… took hold of the doors of the city gate, together with the two posts, and tore them loose, bar and all. He lifted them to his shoulders and carried them to the top of the hill that faces Hebron.* (16:1-3)
- *Sometime later, he fell in love with a woman… whose name was Delilah. The rulers of the Philistines went to her and said, "See if you can lure him into showing you the secret of his great strength… Each one of us will give you eleven hundred shekels of silver." So, Delilah said to Samson, "Tell me the secret of your great strength…" Samson answered her, "If anyone ties me with seven fresh bowstrings that have not been dried, I'll become as weak as any other man." Then… she tied him with them. With men hidden in the room, she called to him, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" But he snapped the bowstrings as easily as a piece of string snaps when it comes close to a flame... Then Delilah said to Samson, "You have made a fool of me; you lied to me. Come now, tell me how you can be tied." He said, "If anyone ties me securely with new ropes that have never been used, I'll become as weak as any other man." So, Delilah took new ropes and tied him with them. Then, with men hidden in the room, she called to him, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" But he snapped the ropes off his arms as if they were threads. Delilah then said to Samson, "All this time you have been making a fool of me and lying to me. Tell me how you can be tied." He replied, "If you weave the seven braids of my head into the fabric on the loom and tighten it with the pin, I'll become as weak as any other man." So, while he was sleeping, Delilah took the seven braids of his head, wove them into the fabric and tightened it with the pin. Again, she called to him, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" He awoke from his sleep and pulled up the pin and the loom, with the fabric. Then she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when you won't confide in me?" With such nagging she prodded him day after day until he was sick to death of it. So, he told her everything. "…I have been a Nazirite dedicated to God from my mother's womb. If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me…" After putting*

him to sleep on her lap, she called for someone to shave off the seven braids of his hair… And his strength left him. Then she called, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" He awoke from his sleep and thought, "I'll go out as before and shake myself free." But he did not know that the LORD had left him. Then the Philistines seized him, gouged out his eyes… Binding him with bronze shackles, they set him to grinding grain in the prison. But the hair on his head began to grow again after it had been shaved. (16:4-22)

- *Now the rulers of the Philistines assembled to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god and to celebrate… While they were in high spirits, they shouted, "Bring out Samson to entertain us." So, they called Samson out of the prison, and he performed for them. When they stood him among the pillars, Samson said to the servant who held his hand, "Put me where I can feel the pillars that support the temple, so that I may lean against them." …all the rulers of the Philistines were there, and on the roof were about three thousand men and women watching Samson perform. Then Samson prayed to the LORD, "Sovereign LORD, remember me. Please, God, strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes." Then Samson reached toward the two central pillars on which the temple stood. Bracing himself against them… Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" Then he pushed with all his might, and down came the temple on the rulers and all the people in it. Thus he killed many more when he died than while he lived... They brought him back and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of Manoah his father. He had led Israel twenty years.* (16:23-31)

- Epilogue (Chapters 17-21)
  - *…a man named Micah… said to his mother, "The eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from you and about which I heard you utter a curse—I have that silver with me; I took it." Then his mother said, "The LORD bless you, my son!" When he returned the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother, she said, "I solemnly consecrate my silver to the LORD for my son to make an image overlaid with silver. I will give it back to you." So, after he returned the silver to his mother, she took two hundred shekels of silver and gave them to a silversmith, who used them to make the idol. And it was put in Micah's house... and he made an*

ephod and some household gods and installed one of his sons as his priest. In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit. A young Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, who had been living within the clan of Judah, left that town in search of some other place to stay... Then Micah said to him, "Live with me and be my father and priest, and I'll give you ten shekels of silver a year, your clothes and your food." So, the Levite agreed to live with him… and the young man became his priest… And Micah said, "Now I know that the LORD will be good to me, since this Levite has become my priest." (17)

- *…And in those days the tribe of the Danites was seeking a place of their own where they might settle, because they had not yet come into an inheritance among the tribes of Israel... So, the Danites sent five of their leading men… to spy out the land and explore it... So, they entered the hill country of Ephraim and came to the house of Micah, where they spent the night. When they were near Micah's house, they recognized the voice of the young Levite… "Why are you here?" He told them what Micah had done for him… Then they said to him, "Please inquire of God to learn whether our journey will be successful." The priest answered them, "Go in peace. Your journey has the LORD's approval." So, the five men left and came to Laish, where they saw that the people were living in safety… at peace and secure... When they returned to… their fellow Danites… They [said] "Come on, let's attack them! We have seen the land, and it is very good... Then six hundred men of the Danites, armed for battle, set out… Then the five men who had spied out the land of Laish said to their fellow Danites, "Do you know that one of these houses has an ephod, some household gods and an image overlaid with silver? Now you know what to do." So, they turned in there and went to the house of the young Levite at Micah's place and greeted him... The five men who had spied out the land went inside and took the idol, the ephod, and the household gods… the priest said to them, "What are you doing?" They answered him, "Be quiet! …Come with us, and be our father and priest... The priest was very pleased. He took the ephod, the household gods and the idol and went along with the people... When they had gone some distance from Micah's house, the men who lived near Micah were called together and overtook the Danites... Micah, seeing that they were too strong for him, turned around and went back home. Then they took what Micah had made, and his priest, and went on to Laish… They attacked them with the sword and burned down their city... The Danites rebuilt the city*

and settled there… There the Danites set up for themselves the idol, and Jonathan, son of Gershom, the son of Moses, and his sons were priests for the tribe of Dan… They continued to use the idol Micah had made… (18)

- *…Now a Levite who lived in a remote area… took a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah. But she was unfaithful to him. She left him and went back to her parents' home in Bethlehem… After she had been there four months, her husband went to her to persuade her to return… She took him into her parents' home, and when her father saw him, he gladly welcomed him... he remained with him three days, eating and drinking, and sleeping there… On the morning of the fifth day, when he rose to go, the woman's father said, "Refresh yourself. Wait till afternoon!" So, the two of them ate together. Then when the man, with his concubine and his servant, got up to leave, his father-in-law, the woman's father, said, "Now look, it's almost evening. Spend the night here; the day is nearly over. Stay and enjoy yourself. Early tomorrow morning you can get up and be on your way home." But, unwilling to stay another night, the man left and went toward Jebus (that is, Jerusalem)… they went on, and the sun set as they neared Gibeah in Benjamin. There they stopped to spend the night... That evening an old man… who was living in Gibeah… came in from his work in the fields... "You are welcome at my house," the old man said... While they were enjoying themselves, some of the wicked men of the city surrounded the house. Pounding on the door, they shouted to the old man who owned the house, "Bring out the man who came to your house so we can have sex with him." The owner of the house went outside and said to them, "No, my friends, don't be so vile. Since this man is my guest, don't do this outrageous thing. Look, here is my virgin daughter, and his concubine. I will bring them out to you now, and you can use them and do to them whatever you wish. But as for this man, don't do such an outrageous thing." But the men would not listen to him. So, the man took his concubine and sent her outside to them, and they raped her and abused her throughout the night, and at dawn they let her go. At daybreak the woman went back to the house where her master was staying, fell down at the door and lay there until daylight. When her master got up in the morning and opened the door of the house… there lay his concubine, fallen in the doorway of the house… Then the man put her on his donkey and set out for home. When he reached home, he took a knife and cut up his concubine, limb by limb, into twelve parts and sent them into all the areas of Israel. Everyone who saw it was saying*

to one another, "Such a thing has never been seen or done, not since the day the Israelites came up out of Egypt..." (19)

- *Then all Israel… came together as one and assembled before the LORD in Mizpah... four hundred thousand men armed with swords... Then the Israelites said, "Tell us how this awful thing happened." So, the Levite, the husband of the murdered woman, said, "I and my concubine came to Gibeah in Benjamin to spend the night. During the night the men of Gibeah came after me and surrounded the house, intending to kill me. They raped my concubine, and she died. I took my concubine, cut her into pieces and sent one piece to each region of Israel's inheritance, because they committed this lewd and outrageous act in Israel..." All the men rose up together as one, saying, "None of us will go home… this is what we'll do to Gibeah: We'll go up against it in the order decided by casting lots... when the army arrives at Gibeah in Benjamin, it can give them what they deserve for this outrageous act done in Israel." The tribes of Israel sent messengers throughout the tribe of Benjamin, saying, "What about this awful crime that was committed among you? Now turn those wicked men of Gibeah over to us so that we may put them to death and purge the evil from Israel." But the Benjamites would not listen to their fellow Israelites... they came together at Gibeah to fight against the Israelites... The Israelites went up to Bethel and inquired of God. They said, "Who of us is to go up first to fight against the Benjamites?" The LORD replied, "Judah shall go first." ...The Israelites went out to fight the Benjamites and took up battle positions against them at Gibeah. The Benjamites came out of Gibeah and cut down twenty-two thousand Israelites on the battlefield that day. But the Israelites encouraged one another and again took up their positions where they had stationed themselves the first day. The Israelites went up and wept before the LORD until evening, and they inquired of the LORD. They said, "Shall we go up again to fight against the Benjamites, our fellow Israelites?" The LORD answered, "Go up against them." Then the Israelites drew near to Benjamin the second day. This time, when the Benjamites came out from Gibeah to oppose them, they cut down another eighteen thousand Israelites, all of them armed with swords. Then all the Israelites, the whole army, went up to Bethel, and there they sat weeping before the LORD. They fasted that day until evening and presented burnt offerings and fellowship offerings to the LORD. And the Israelites inquired of the LORD… "Shall we go up*

again to fight against the Benjamites, our fellow Israelites, or not?" The LORD responded, "Go, for tomorrow I will give them into your hands." Then Israel set an ambush around Gibeah. They went up against the Benjamites on the third day and took up positions against Gibeah as they had done before. The Benjamites came out to meet them and were drawn away from the city. They began to inflict casualties on the Israelites as before… All the men of Israel moved from their places and took up positions at Baal Tamar, and the Israelite ambush charged out of its place on the west of Gibeah. Then ten thousand of Israel's able young men made a frontal attack on Gibeah. The fighting was so heavy that the Benjamites did not realize how near disaster was. The LORD defeated Benjamin before Israel, and on that day the Israelites struck down 25,100 Benjamites… Those who had been in ambush made a sudden dash into Gibeah, spread out and put the whole city to the sword... the Benjamites turned and saw the whole city going up in smoke... So, they fled before the Israelites in the direction of the wilderness, but they could not escape the battle. And the Israelites who came out of the towns cut them down there... Eighteen thousand Benjamites fell… As they turned and fled toward the wilderness… the Israelites cut down five thousand men along the roads. They kept pressing after the Benjamites as far as Gidom and struck down two thousand more. On that day twenty-five thousand Benjamite swordsmen fell… But six hundred of them turned and fled into the wilderness… where they stayed four months. The men of Israel went back to Benjamin and put all the towns to the sword, including the animals and everything else they found. All the towns they came across they set on fire. (20)

- *…The people went to Bethel, where they sat before God until evening, raising their voices and weeping bitterly. "LORD, God of Israel," they cried, "why has this happened to Israel? Why should one tribe be missing from Israel today?" Early the next day the people built an altar and presented burnt offerings and fellowship offerings... Now the Israelites grieved for the tribe of Benjamin, their fellow Israelites... Then they asked, "Which one of the tribes of Israel failed to assemble before the LORD at Mizpah?" They discovered that no one from Jabesh Gilead had come to the camp for the assembly... So, the assembly sent twelve thousand fighting men with instructions to go to Jabesh Gilead and put to the sword those living there, including the women and children... They found among the people living in Jabesh Gilead four hundred young wom-*

en… Then the whole assembly sent an offer of peace to the Benjamites… So, the Benjamites returned… and were given the women of Jabesh Gilead who had been spared. But there were not enough for all of them... "The Benjamite survivors must have heirs," they said, "so that a tribe of Israel will not be wiped out. We can't give them our daughters as wives, since we Israelites have taken this oath… So, they instructed the Benjamites, saying, "Go and hide in the vineyards and watch. When the young women of Shiloh come out to join in the dancing, rush from the vineyards and each of you seize one of them to be your wife. Then return to the land of Benjamin. When their fathers or brothers complain to us, we will say to them, 'Do us the favor of helping them, because we did not get wives for them during the war. You will not be guilty of breaking your oath because you did not give your daughters to them.'" So that is what the Benjamites did... the Israelites left that place and went home to their tribes and clans, each to his own inheritance. In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit. (21)



RUTH

- The Book of Ruth clearly belongs in the period of Judges, *"In the days when the judges ruled"* (1:1).
- The book is named for its heroine, Ruth.
- The book of Ruth is a love story. It is unique in the fact that Ruth was the great-grandmother of David, placing her in the line of Christ. Ruth is one of the four women named in the Messianic line along with Tamar, Rahab, and Bathsheba.

OUTLINE

- A man from *Bethlehem* named *Elimelek* traveled to *Moab* because *there was a famine in the land.* The man had two sons, *Mahlon* and *Kilion.* His wife's name was *Naomi.* (1:1-2)
- *Elimelek* died in *Moab* and his two sons married *Moabite women, Orpah* and *Ruth.* After *about ten years both Mahlon and Kilion also died.* (1:4-5).
- *Naomi* heard the famine had ended in Israel and decided to go back home. *Orpah* decided to stay in Moab, but *Ruth* told her mother-in-law, *"Where you go, I will go, and where you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried"* (1:16-17). So, the two women traveled back to Bethlehem.
- Once they were back in Bethlehem, *Ruth* went to the wheat field to glean food for them to eat. So she went out, entered a field and began to glean behind the harvesters. *As it turned out, she was working in a field belonging to Boaz, who was from the clan of Elimelek* (2:3).
- *Boaz* took an interest in *Ruth*: *So, Boaz said to Ruth, "My daughter, listen to me. Don't go and glean in another field and don't go away from here. Stay here with the women who work for me. Watch the field where the men are harvesting and follow along after the women. I have told the men not to lay a hand on you. And whenever you are thirsty, go and get a drink from the water jars the men have filled... I've been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband—how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before. May the LORD repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge"* (2:8-12).
- *...Then Ruth told her mother-in-law about the one at whose place she had been working... "The LORD bless him!" Naomi said to her daughter-in-law. "He has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead." She added, "That man is our close relative; he is one of our guardian* (kinsman)*-redeemers"* (2:19-20)

    - NOTE: The kinsman-redeemer is a male relative who, according to Mosaic Law, had the privilege or responsibility to act on behalf of a relative who was in trouble, danger, or need. The Hebrew term (*go el*) designates one who delivers or rescues or redeems property or person.
    - *"If one of your fellow Israelites becomes poor and sells some of their property, their nearest relative is to come and redeem what they have sold"* (Leviticus 25:25).
    - *"If a foreigner residing among you becomes rich and any of your fellow Israelites become poor and sell themselves to the foreigner or to a member of the foreigner's clan, they retain the right of redemption after they have sold themselves. One of their relatives may redeem them: An uncle or a cousin or any blood relative in their clan may redeem them"* (Leviticus 25:47-49).
- *One day Ruth's mother-in-law Naomi said to her, "My daughter, I must find a home for you, where you will be well provided for. Now Boaz, with whose women you have worked, is a relative of ours. Tonight, he will be winnowing barley on the threshing floor. Wash, put on perfume, and get dressed in your best clothes. Then go down to the threshing floor, but don't let him know you are there until he has finished eating and drinking. When he lies down, note the place where he is lying. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down. He will tell you what to do..." So, she went down to the threshing floor and did everything her mother-in-law told her to do. When Boaz had finished eating and drinking and was in good spirits, he went over to lie down at the far end of the grain pile. Ruth approached quietly, uncovered his feet, and lay down. In the middle of the night something startled the man; "... Who are you?" he asked. "I am your servant Ruth," she said. "Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a guardian-redeemer of our family." "The LORD bless you, my daughter," he replied… don't be afraid. I will do for you all you ask... Although it is true that I am a guardian-redeemer of our family, there is another who is more closely related than I. Stay here for the night, and in the morning if he wants to do his duty as your guardian-redeemer, good; let him redeem you. But if he is not willing, as surely as the LORD lives, I will do it..." So, she lay at his feet until morning… [Then] he said, "Bring me the shawl you are wearing and hold it out." When she did so, he poured into it six measures of barley and placed the bundle on her. Then he went back to town. When Ruth came to her mother-in-law… Naomi said, "Wait, my daughter, until you find out what happens. For the man will not rest until the matter is settled today."* (3)
- *Boaz went up to the town gate and sat down there just as the guardian-redeemer he had mentioned came along. Boaz said, "Come over here, my friend, and sit down." So, he went over and*

sat down. Boaz took ten of the elders of the town… Then he said to the guardian-redeemer, "Naomi, who has come back from Moab, is selling the piece of land that belonged to our relative Elimelek. I thought I should bring the matter to your attention and suggest that you buy it…" For no one has the right to do it except you, and I am next in line." "I will redeem it," he said. Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the land from Naomi, you also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the dead man's widow… At this, the guardian-redeemer said, "Then I cannot redeem it because I might endanger my own estate. You redeem it yourself. I cannot do it." (in earlier times in Israel, for the redemption and transfer of property to become final, one party took off his sandal and gave it to the other…) So, the guardian-redeemer said to Boaz, "Buy it yourself." And he removed his sandal. (4)

- *So, Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife… and she gave birth to a son… And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.* (4:13-16)

NEXT WEEK: 1st & 2nd Samuel



Lesson 9

1ST SAMUEL

- The book of 1st Samuel begins the record of the rise and fall of the Israelite monarchy, a section that includes 1st and 2nd Samuel, 1st and 2nd Kings, and 1st and 2nd Chronicles.
- In the Hebrew manuscripts, 1st and 2nd Samuel were one book, as was 1st and 2nd Kings and 1st and 2nd Chronicles.
- 1st Samuel covers a definite period of about 150 years from the birth of Samuel, the last judge, to the death of Saul, the first king.
- At least part or most of the book was written by Samuel himself, but others probably contributed. *"As for the events of King David's reign, from beginning to end, they are written in the records of Samuel the seer, the records of Nathan the prophet and the records of Gad the seer, together with the details of his reign and power, and the circumstances that surrounded him and Israel and the kingdoms of all the other lands"* (1 Chronicles 29:29-30).

OUTLINE

- Samuel, the Last Judge (Chapters 1–8).
    - The birth of Samuel.
        - *There was a certain man from… the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Elkanah… He had two wives… Hannah and… Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had none.* (1:1-2)
        - At this time, the tabernacle was permanently set up at Shiloh (Joshua 18:1) and Eli's sons, *Hophni and Phinehas were priests of the Lord* (1:3).
        - *Whenever the day came for Elkanah to sacrifice, he would give portions of the meat to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters. But to Hannah he gave a double portion because he loved her, and the LORD had closed her womb. Because the LORD had closed Hannah's womb, her rival kept provoking her… till she wept and would not eat… This went on year after year.* (1:4-7)
        - *Once when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh… Eli the priest was sitting on his chair by the doorpost of the LORD's house. In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the LORD, weeping bitterly. And she made a vow, saying, "LORD Almighty, if you will only look on your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head."*
          …Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk and said to her, "How long are you going to stay drunk?

Put away your wine." "Not so, my lord," Hannah replied, "I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking… I was pouring out my soul to the LORD. Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief." Eli answered, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him." (1:9-17)

- *So, in the course of time Hannah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, saying, "Because I asked the LORD for him..." After he was weaned, she took the boy… and brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh... they brought the boy to Eli, and she said to him, "…I am the woman who stood here beside you praying to the LORD. I prayed for this child, and the LORD has granted me what I asked of him. So now I give him to the LORD. For his whole life he will be given over to the LORD..."* (1:24-28).

- Corruption in the priesthood.
  - *Eli's sons were scoundrels… it was the practice of the priests that, whenever any of the people offered a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come with a three-pronged fork in his hand while the meat was being boiled and would plunge the fork into the… pot. Whatever the fork brought up the priest would take for himself* (see Deuteronomy 18:1 -5)*... But even before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and say to the person who was sacrificing, "Give the priest some meat to roast; he won't accept boiled meat from you, but only raw." If the person said to him, "Let the fat be burned first, and then take whatever you want," the servant would answer, "No, hand it over now; if you don't, I'll take it by force." This sin of the young men was very great in the LORD's sight, for they were treating the LORD's offering with contempt.* (2:12-17)
  - *Now Eli, who was very old, heard about everything his sons were doing to all Israel and how they slept with the women who served at the entrance to the tent of meeting. So, he said to them, "Why do you do such things? I hear from all the people about these wicked deeds of yours. No, my sons; the report I hear spreading among the LORD's people is not good… His sons, however, did not listen to their father's rebuke…* (2:22-25)
  - *…a man of God came to Eli and said to him, "This is what the LORD says: 'Did I not clearly reveal myself to your ancestor's family when they were in Egypt under Pharaoh? I chose your ancestor out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest… I also gave your ancestor's family all the food offerings presented by the Israelites. Why do you scorn my*

sacrifice and offering that I prescribed for my dwelling? Why do you honor your sons more than me by fattening yourselves on the choice parts of every offering made by my people Israel?' "Therefore, the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: '...Those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me will be disdained... The time is coming when I will cut short your strength and the strength of your priestly house, so that no one in it will reach old age... all your descendants will die in the prime of life... what happens to your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, will be a sign to you—they will both die on the same day. I will raise up for myself a faithful priest..." (2:27-35)

- God calls Samuel (3).
  - *The boy Samuel ministered before the LORD under Eli. In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions.*
  - *One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the house of the LORD, where the ark of God was.*

    Then the LORD called Samuel. Samuel answered, "Here I am." And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down."

    So he went and lay down. Again the LORD called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." "My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD: The word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.

    A third time the LORD called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." Then Eli realized that the LORD was calling the boy. So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'"

    So, Samuel went and lay down in his place. The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

    And the LORD said to Samuel: "See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears about it tingle. At that time I will carry out against Eli everything I spoke against his family...

    Samuel lay down until morning and then opened the doors of the house of the LORD. He was afraid to tell Eli the vision, but Eli called him and said, "...What was it he said to you? So, Samuel told him everything, hiding nothing from him. Then Eli said, "He is the LORD; let him do what

is good in his eyes."
    - *The LORD was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of Samuel's words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the LORD. The LORD continued to appear at Shiloh, and there he revealed himself to Samuel through his word.*
- God's judgement (4).
    - *….the Israelites went out to fight against the Philistines... Israel was defeated by the Philistines, who killed about four thousand of them on the battlefield...*
    - *So, the people sent men to Shiloh, and they brought back the ark of the covenant… And Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark… When the ark… came into the camp, all Israel raised such a great shout that the ground shook... Hearing the uproar, the Philistines… were afraid...*
    - *…the Philistines fought, and the Israelites were defeated and every man fled to his tent. The slaughter was very great; Israel lost thirty thousand foot soldiers. The ark of God was captured, and Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, died...*
    - *…a Benjamite ran from the battle line and went to Shiloh with his clothes torn and dust on his head... there was Eli sitting on his chair by the side of the road, watching, because his heart feared for the ark of God. When the man entered the town and [he] told what had happened… "Israel fled before the Philistines, and the army has suffered heavy losses... your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been captured." When he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell backward off his chair by the side of the gate. His neck was broken, and he died… He had led Israel forty years. His daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant… When she heard the news… she went into labor and gave birth but was overcome by her labor pains. As she was dying… She named the boy Ichabod, saying, "The Glory has departed from Israel…"*
- The Philistines and the Ark (5-7).
    - *After the Philistines had captured the ark of God, they took it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. Then they carried the ark into Dagon's temple and set it beside Dagon. When the people of Ashdod rose early the next day, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the LORD! They took Dagon and put him back in his place. But the following morning when they rose, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the LORD! His head and hands had been broken off and were lying on the*

threshold; only his body remained. (5:1-5)

- *The LORD's hand was heavy on the people of Ashdod and its vicinity; he brought devastation on them and afflicted them with tumors. When the people of Ashdod saw what was happening, they said, "The ark of the god of Israel must not stay here with us… Have the ark of the god of Israel moved to Gath..." But after they had moved it, the LORD's hand was against that city, throwing it into a great panic. He afflicted the people of the city, both young and old, with an outbreak of tumors. So, they sent the ark of God to Ekron. As the ark of God was entering Ekron, the people of Ekron cried out, "They have brought the ark of the god of Israel around to us to kill us and our people…." So, they called together all the rulers of the Philistines and said, "Send the ark of the god of Israel away; let it go back to its own place, or it will kill us and our people..."* (5:6-12)
- *When the ark of the LORD had been in Philistine territory seven months, the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners and said, "What shall we do with the ark of the LORD? …They answered, "If you return the ark of the god of Israel, do not send it back to him without a gift; by all means send a guilt offering to him... give glory to Israel's god. Perhaps he will lift his hand from you… get a new cart ready, with two cows that have calved and have never been yoked. Hitch the cows to the cart… Take the ark of the LORD and put it on the cart, and in a chest beside it put the gold objects you are sending back to him as a guilt offering... So, they did this…* (6:1-10)
- *Now the people of Beth Shemesh were harvesting their wheat in the valley, and when they looked up and saw the ark, they rejoiced… The cart came to the field of Joshua… and there it stopped beside a large rock. The people chopped up the wood of the cart and sacrificed the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD. The Levites took down the ark of the LORD, together with the chest containing the gold objects, and placed them on the large rock... The five rulers of the Philistines saw all this and then returned… But God struck down some of the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh, putting seventy of them to death because they looked into the ark of the LORD... And the people of Beth Shemesh asked, "Who can stand in the presence of the LORD, this holy God? …Then they sent messengers to the people of Kiriath Jearim, saying, "The Philistines have returned the ark of the LORD. Come down and take it up to your town."* (6:13-20)

- *So, the men of Kiriath Jearim came and took up the ark of the LORD. They brought it to Abinadab's house on the hill and consecrated Eleazar his son to guard the ark of the LORD. The ark remained at Kiriath Jearim a long time—twenty years in all. Then all the people of Israel turned back to the LORD.* (7:1-2)

- God defeats the Philistines (7)
  - *Samuel said to all the Israelites, "If you are returning to the LORD with all your hearts, then rid yourselves of the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths and commit yourselves to the LORD and serve him only… So, the Israelites put away their Baals and Ashtoreths, and served the LORD only.* (7:3-4)
  - *Then Samuel said, "Assemble all Israel at Mizpah, and I will intercede with the LORD for you." When they had assembled at Mizpah, they drew water and poured it out before the LORD. On that day they fasted and there they confessed, "We have sinned against the LORD."* (7:5-6)
  - *…When the Philistines heard that Israel had assembled at Mizpah, the rulers of the Philistines came up to attack them... Then Samuel took a suckling lamb and sacrificed it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD... While Samuel was sacrificing the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to engage Israel in battle. But… the LORD thundered with loud thunder against the Philistines and threw them into such a panic that they were routed before the Israelites. The men of Israel rushed out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, slaughtering them along the way to a point below Beth Kar.* (7:7-11)
  - *Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the LORD has helped us."* (7:12)
  - *So, the Philistines were subdued, and they stopped invading Israel's territory. Throughout Samuel's lifetime, the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines. The towns from Ekron to Gath that the Philistines had captured from Israel were restored to Israel, and Israel delivered the neighboring territory from the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.* (7:13-14)
  - *Samuel continued as Israel's leader all the days of his life. From year to year, he went on a circuit from Bethel to Gilgal to Mizpah, judging Israel in all those places. But he always went back to Ramah, where his home was, and there he also held court for Israel. And he built an altar there to the LORD.* (7:15-17)

- Saul, the First King (Chapters 8–15).
  - The people demand a king.
    - *When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as Israel's leaders. The name of his firstborn was Joel and the name of his second was Abijah, and they served at Beersheba. But his sons did not follow his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice.* (8:1-3)
    - *So, all the elders of Israel… said to him, "You are old, and your sons do not follow your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have." …this displeased Samuel; so, he prayed to the LORD. And the LORD told him: "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king... Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will claim as his rights."* (8:4-9)
    - *But the people refused to listen to Samuel. "…We want a king over us. Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles."* (8:19-20)
  - Saul becomes king.
    - *…a Benjamite… Saul, as handsome a young man as could be found anywhere in Israel, and he was a head taller than anyone else.* (9:1-2)
    - *Then Samuel took a flask of olive oil and poured it on Saul's head and kissed him, saying, "Has not the LORD anointed you ruler over his inheritance?* (10:1)
    - *Samuel summoned the people of Israel to the LORD at Mizpah and said to them, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I brought Israel up out of Egypt, and I delivered you from the power of Egypt and all the kingdoms that oppressed you.' But you have now rejected your God, who saves you out of all your disasters and calamities. And you have said, 'No, appoint a king over us.' So now present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and clans." When Samuel had all Israel come forward by tribes, the tribe of Benjamin was taken by lot. Then he brought forward the tribe of Benjamin, clan by clan, and Matri's clan was taken. Finally Saul son of Kish was taken... They ran and brought him out, and as he stood among the people he was a head taller than any of the others. Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see the man the LORD has chosen? There is no one like him among all the people." Then the people shouted, "Long live the king!"* (10:17-24)
  - Saul defeated the Ammonites at Jabesh Gilead (11:1-11).
  - Saul was confirmed as king at Gilgal (11:12-14).

- Samuel's farewell speech as Israel's judge.
    - *Samuel said to all Israel, "I have listened to everything you said to me and have set a king over you. Now you have a king as your leader. As for me, I am old and gray, and my sons are here with you. I have been your leader from my youth until this day. Here I stand. Testify against me in the presence of the LORD and his anointed... "You have not cheated or oppressed us," they replied... Samuel said to them, "The LORD is witness against you, and also his anointed is witness this day, that you have not found anything in my hand." "He is witness,"* they said. (12:1-5)
    - *"Now then, stand still and see this great thing the LORD is about to do… I will call on the LORD to send thunder and rain. And you will realize what an evil thing you did in the eyes of the LORD when you asked for a king." Then Samuel called on the LORD, and that same day the LORD sent thunder and rain. So, all the people stood in awe of the LORD and of Samuel... "Pray to the LORD your God for your servants so that we will not die, for we have added to all our other sins the evil of asking for a king." "Do not be afraid," Samuel replied. "You have done all this evil; yet do not turn away from the LORD but serve the LORD with all your heart. Do not turn away after useless idols... For the sake of his great name the LORD will not reject his people… far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by failing to pray for you. And I will teach you the way that is good and right..."* (12:16-25)
- King Saul's reign.
    - *Saul was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel forty- two years.* (13:1)
    - War with the Philistines (13-14).
        - Under Saul's leadership, *Jonathan attacked the Philistine outpost at Geba* (13:3). *The Philistines assembled to fight Israel, with three thousand chariots, six thousand charioteers, and soldiers as numerous as the sand on the seashore... When the Israelites saw that their situation was critical… they hid in caves… Some Hebrews even crossed the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul remained at Gilgal, and all the troops with him were quaking with fear. He waited seven days, the time set by Samuel; but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and Saul's men began to scatter... And Saul offered up the burnt offering. Just as he finished making the offering, Samuel arrived… "You have done a foolish thing," Samuel said. "You have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your*

kingdom over Israel for all time. But now your kingdom will not endure…" Then Samuel left Gilgal… and Saul counted the men who were with him. They numbered about six hundred. (13:3-15)

- *Raiding parties went out from the Philistine camp… Not a blacksmith could be found in the whole land of Israel… So, all Israel went down to the Philistines to have their plow points, mattocks, axes, and sickles sharpened... not a soldier with Saul and Jonathan had a sword or spear in his hand; only Saul and his son Jonathan had them.* (13:17-22)
- *One day Jonathan… said to his young armor-bearer, "Come, let's go over to the Philistine outpost on the other side." But he did not tell his father. Saul was staying on the outskirts of Gibeah… With him were about six hundred men, among whom was Ahijah* (a priest)*… Jonathan said to his young armor-bearer, "…Perhaps the LORD will act in our behalf. Nothing can hinder the LORD from saving, whether by many or by few." …his armor-bearer said. "Go ahead; I am with you heart and soul." …So both of them showed themselves to the Philistine outpost... The men of the outpost shouted to Jonathan and his armor-bearer, "Come up to us and we'll teach you a lesson." So, Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, "Climb up after me; the LORD has given them into the hand of Israel." …The Philistines fell before Jonathan, and his armor-bearer followed and killed behind him. In that first attack Jonathan and his armor-bearer killed some twenty men… Then panic struck the whole army… and the ground shook. It was a panic sent by God. Saul's lookouts at Gibeah… saw the army melting away in all directions. Then Saul said to the men who were with him, "Muster the forces and see who has left us." When they did, it was Jonathan and his armor-bearer who were not there... Then Saul and all his men assembled and went to the battle. They found the Philistines in total confusion, striking each other with their swords... So, on that day the LORD saved Israel, and the battle moved on…* (14:1-23)
- *Now the Israelites were in distress that day, because Saul had bound the people under an oath, saying, "Cursed be anyone who eats food before evening comes, before I have avenged myself on my enemies!" So, none of the troops tasted food. The entire army entered the woods, and there was honey on the*

ground. When they went into the woods, they saw the honey oozing out; yet no one put his hand to his mouth, because they feared the oath. But Jonathan had not heard that his father had bound the people with the oath, so he reached out the end of the staff that was in his hand and dipped it into the honeycomb. He raised his hand to his mouth, and his eyes brightened.

Then one of the soldiers told him, "Your father bound the army under a strict oath, saying, 'Cursed be anyone who eats food today!' That is why the men are faint." Jonathan said, "My father has made trouble for the country. See how my eyes brightened when I tasted a little of this honey. How much better it would have been if the men had eaten today some of the plunder, they took from their enemies..." That day, after the Israelites had struck down the Philistines… They pounced on the plunder and, taking sheep, cattle, and calves, they butchered them on the ground and ate them, together with the blood.

Then someone said to Saul, "Look, the men are sinning against the LORD by eating meat that has blood in it." ...Then he said, "Go out among the men and tell them, 'Each of you bring me your cattle and sheep, and slaughter them here and eat them. Do not sin against the LORD by eating meat with blood still in it.'" ...Then Saul built an altar to the LORD…

Saul said, "Let us go down and pursue the Philistines by night and plunder them till dawn and let us not leave one of them alive." ...But the priest said, "Let us inquire of God here." ...But God did not answer him that day. Saul therefore said, "Come here, all you who are leaders of the army, and let us find out what sin has been committed today. ...Then Saul prayed to the LORD, the God of Israel, "Why have you not answered your servant today?" Jonathan and Saul were taken by lot, and the men were cleared... And Jonathan was taken. Then Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done." So, Jonathan told him, "I tasted a little honey with the end of my staff and now I must die!" ...But the men said to Saul, "Should Jonathan die? ...Never! ...for he did this today with God's help." So, the men rescued Jonathan, and he was not put to death. Then Saul stopped pursuing the Philistines, and they withdrew to their own land.

After Saul had assumed rule over Israel, he fought

against their enemies on every side: Moab, the Ammonites, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines... All the days of Saul there was bitter war with the Philistines, and whenever Saul saw a mighty or brave man, he took him into his service. (14:14-52)

- Saul's rejection (15).
  - *Samuel said to Saul, "…This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt. Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy all that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels, and donkeys.'"*
  - *…Then Saul attacked the Amalekites… But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle… everything that was good…* (15:1-9)
  - *Early in the morning Samuel got up and went to meet Saul, but he was told, "Saul has gone to Carmel. There he has set up a monument in his own honor and has turned and gone on down to Gilgal." When Samuel reached him, Saul said, "The LORD bless you! I have carried out the LORD's instructions."*

    But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears? What is this lowing of cattle that I hear?"

    Saul answered, "The soldiers brought them from the Amalekites; they spared the best of the sheep and cattle to sacrifice to the LORD your God, but we totally destroyed the rest."

    "Enough!" Samuel said to Saul... "Although you were once small in your own eyes… The LORD anointed you king over Israel. And he sent you on a mission, saying, 'Go and completely destroy …the Amalekites… Why did you not obey the LORD?"

    "But I did obey the LORD," Saul said. "I went on the mission the LORD assigned me. I completely destroyed the Amalekites and brought back Agag their king. The soldiers took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of what was devoted to God, in order to sacrifice them to the LORD…

    But Samuel replied: "Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has rejected you as king."

Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned. I violated the LORD's command and your instructions. I was afraid of the men and so I gave in to them. Now I beg you, forgive my sin and come back with me, so that I may worship the LORD." But Samuel said to him, "I will not go back with you. You have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you as king over Israel!"

...And Samuel put Agag to death before the LORD at Gilgal. Then Samuel left for Ramah, but Saul went up to his home in Gibeah… Until the day Samuel died, he did not go to see Saul again, though Samuel mourned for him. And the LORD regretted that he had made Saul king over Israel. (15:12-35)

- David, the Anointed Successor (Chapters 16–31)
  - God chose David to replace Saul. *The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king." ...Samuel did what the LORD said. ...he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed stands here before the LORD." But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." ...Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, "The LORD has not chosen these…. Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse answered... So, he sent for him… He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; this is the one." So, Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David. Samuel then went to Ramah.* (16:1-13)
  - *Now the Spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him... So, Saul said to his attendants, "Find someone who plays well and bring him to me." ... David came to Saul and entered his service. Saul liked him very much, and David became one of his armor-bearers... Whenever the spirit from God came on Saul, David would take up his lyre and play. Then relief would come to Saul; he would feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him.* (16:14-23)
  - David defeated Goliath (17).
    - *Now the Philistines gathered their forces for war and assembled at Sokoh in Judah... Saul and the Israelites assembled… and drew up their battle line to meet the Philis-*

tines... A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. His height was six cubits and a span (about 10 feet). *He had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of scale armor of bronze weighing five thousand shekels* (about 125 pounds)*; on his legs he wore bronze greaves, and a bronze javelin was slung on his back. His spear shaft was like a weaver's rod, and its iron point weighed six hundred shekels* (about 15 pounds)… *Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "…Choose a man and have him come down to me. If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us... This day I defy the armies of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other." …Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.*

- *…Jesse's three oldest sons had followed Saul to the war… but David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's sheep at Bethlehem. For forty days the Philistine came forward every morning and evening and took his stand. Now Jesse said to his son David, "Take this ephah of roasted grain and these ten loaves of bread for your brothers… Take along these ten cheeses to the commander of their unit. See how your brothers are and bring back some assurance from them... David left the flock in the care of a shepherd, loaded up and set out, as Jesse had directed... Goliath, the Philistine champion from Gath, stepped out from his lines and shouted his usual defiance, and David heard it. Whenever the Israelites saw the man, they all fled from him in great fear...*

  David asked the men standing near him, "What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" …What David said was overheard and reported to Saul, and Saul sent for him. David said to Saul, "Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him." Saul replied, "You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a young man, and he has been a warrior from his youth." But David said to Saul, "…Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God..." Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you."

  Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head. David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around… "I cannot go in these," he said to Saul, "because

I am not used to them." So, he took them off. Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine… He said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. "Come here," he said, "and I'll give your flesh to the birds and the wild animals!" David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hands, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head..." As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him. Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell face down on the ground... He took hold of the Philistine's sword and drew it from the sheath... he cut off his head with the sword. When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they turned and ran. Then the men of Israel and Judah surged forward with a shout and pursued the Philistines… Their dead were strewn along the Shaaraim road to Gath and Ekron. When the Israelites returned from chasing the Philistines, they plundered their camp. David took the Philistine's head and brought it to Jerusalem; he put the Philistine's weapons in his own tent... (17)

- Saul became insanely jealous of David and tried to kill him multiple times (18-19).
    - *…From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return home to his family.*
    - *…Jonathan became one in spirit with David… And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself…*
    - *Whatever mission Saul sent him on, David was so successful that Saul gave him a high rank in the army. This pleased all the troops, and Saul's officers as well. When the men were returning home after David had killed the Philistine, the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with timbrels and lyres. As they danced, they sang: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands." Saul was very angry… And from that time on Saul kept a close eye on David.*
    - *The next day an evil spirit from God came forcefully on Saul. He was prophesying in his house, while David was playing the lyre, as he usually did. Saul had a spear in his*

hand, and he hurled it, saying to himself, "I'll pin David to the wall." But David eluded him twice. Saul was afraid of David because the LORD was with David but had departed from Saul…

- *…David led the troops in their campaigns. In everything he did he had great success, because the LORD was with him. When Saul saw how successful he was, he was afraid of him. But all Israel and Judah loved David because he led them in their campaigns….*
- *…Now Saul's daughter Michal was in love with David, and when they told Saul about it, he was pleased. "I will give her to him," he thought, "so that she may be a snare to him and so that the hand of the Philistines may be against him." …Then Saul gave him his daughter Michal in marriage. When Saul realized that the LORD was with David and that his daughter Michal loved David, Saul became still more afraid of him, and he remained his enemy the rest of his days.*
- *…Saul told his son Jonathan and all the attendants to kill David. But Jonathan had taken a great liking to David and warned him, "My father Saul is looking for a chance to kill you. Be on your guard… go into hiding and stay there… I'll speak to him about you and will tell you what I find out." …Saul listened to Jonathan and took this oath: "As surely as the LORD lives, David will not be put to death." So, Jonathan called David and told him the whole conversation. He brought him to Saul, and David was with Saul as before.*
- *Once more war broke out, and David went out and fought the Philistines. He struck them with such force that they fled before him. But an evil spirit from the LORD came on Saul as he was sitting in his house with his spear in his hand. While David was playing the lyre, Saul tried to pin him to the wall with his spear, but David eluded him as Saul drove the spear into the wall. That night David made good his escape. Saul sent men to David's house to watch it and to kill him in the morning. But Michal, David's wife, warned him, "If you don't run for your life tonight, tomorrow you'll be killed." So, Michal let David down through a window, and he fled and escaped…*
- *When David had fled and made his escape, he went to Samuel at Ramah and told him all that Saul had done to him…*

- David spent years running from Saul (20-27).
  - David's friendship with Jonathan (20).
    - *…Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, "May the LORD call David's enemies to account." And Jonathan had David reaffirm his oath*

out of love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself…

- *…Saul's anger flared up at Jonathan… "You son of a perverse and rebellious woman! Don't I know that you have sided with the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of the mother who bore you? As long as the son of Jesse lives on this earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Now send someone to bring him to me, for he must die!" "Why should he be put to death? What has he done?" Jonathan asked his father. But Saul hurled his spear at him to kill him. Then Jonathan knew that his father intended to kill David...*
- *Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the LORD, saying, 'The LORD is witness between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants forever.'" Then David left, and Jonathan went back to the town.*

- *David went to Nob, to Ahimelek the priest... "…what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever you can find." …So, the priest gave him the consecrated bread… David asked Ahimelek, "Don't you have a spear or a sword here? I haven't brought my sword or any other weapon…" The priest replied, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the Valley of Elah, is here; it is wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If you want it, take it; there is no sword here but that one." David said, "There is none like it; give it to me."*
- David pretended to be insane. *That day David fled from Saul and went to Achish king of Gath. But the servants of Achish said to him, "Isn't this David, the king of the land?" …David… was very much afraid of Achish… So, he pretended to be insane in their presence… making marks on the doors of the gate and letting saliva run down his beard. Achish said to his servants, "…Am I so short of madmen that you have to bring this fellow here to carry on like this in front of me?"*
- David gathered an army (22). *David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and his father's household heard about it, they went down to him there. All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their commander. About four hundred men were with him. From there David* went to Mizpah *in Moab and said to the king of Moab, "Would you let my father and mother come and stay with you until I learn what God will do for me?" So, he left them with the*

king of Moab… But the prophet Gad said to David, "Do not stay in the stronghold. Go into the land of Judah." So, David left and went to the forest of Hereth.

- Saul ordered the murder of the priests of Nob (22). *Saul heard that David and his men had been discovered… Doeg the Edomite, who was standing with Saul's officials, said, "I saw the son of Jesse come to Ahimelek… Ahimelek inquired of the LORD for him; he also gave him provisions and the sword of Goliath the Philistine." Then the king sent for the priest Ahimelek… and all the men of his family, who were the priests at Nob… "Why have you conspired against me, you and the son of Jesse, giving him bread and a sword and inquiring of God for him, so that he has rebelled against me and lies in wait for me, as he does today?" Ahimelek answered the king, "Who of all your servants is as loyal as David, the king's son-in-law, captain of your bodyguard and highly respected in your household? Was that day the first time I inquired of God for him? Of course not! Let not the king accuse your servant or any of his father's family, for your servant knows nothing at all about this whole affair." But the king said, "You will surely die… you and your whole family." Then the king ordered the guards at his side: "Turn and kill the priests of the LORD, because they too have sided with David…" But the king's officials were unwilling to… strike the priests of the LORD. The king then ordered Doeg, "You turn and strike down the priests." So, Doeg the Edomite turned and struck them down. That day he killed eighty-five men… He also put to the sword Nob, the town of the priests, with its men and women, its children and infants, and its cattle, donkeys, and sheep. But one son… Abiathar, escaped and fled to join David...*
- David saved Keilah (23). *When David was told, "…the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and are looting the threshing floors," he inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?" The LORD answered him, "Go, attack the Philistines and save Keilah." …So, David and his men went to Keilah, fought the Philistines, and carried off their livestock. He inflicted heavy losses on the Philistines and saved the people of Keilah...*

  Saul was told that David had gone to Keilah, and he said, "God has delivered him into my hands, for David has imprisoned himself by entering a town with gates and bars." And Saul called up all his forces for battle, to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men... *So, David and his men, about six hundred in number, left Keilah and kept moving from place to place. When Saul was told that*

David had escaped from Keilah, he did not go there. David stayed in the wilderness strongholds and in the hills of the Desert of Ziph. Day after day Saul searched for him, but God did not give David into his hands... The Ziphites went up to Saul at Gibeah and said, "Is not David hiding among us in the strongholds at Horesh, on the hill of Hakilah, south of Jeshimon? …come down whenever it pleases you to do so, and we will be responsible for giving him into your hands." …David and his men were in the Desert of Maon, in the Arabah south of Jeshimon. Saul and his men began the search, and when David was told about it, he went down to the rock and stayed in the Desert of Maon. When Saul heard this, he went into the Desert of Maon in pursuit of David. Saul was going along one side of the mountain, and David and his men were on the other side, hurrying to get away from Saul. As Saul and his forces were closing in on David and his men to capture them, a messenger came to Saul, saying, "Come quickly! The Philistines are raiding the land." Then Saul broke off his pursuit of David and went to meet the Philistines... And David went up from there and lived in the strongholds of En Gedi.

- David spared Saul's Life (24). *After Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, "David is in the Desert of En Gedi." So, Saul took three thousand able young men from all Israel and set out to look for David and his men… He came to the sheep pens along the way; a cave was there, and Saul went in to relieve himself. David and his men were far back in the cave... David crept up unnoticed and cut off a corner of Saul's robe. Afterward, David was conscience-stricken for having cut off a corner of his robe. He said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the LORD's anointed, or lay my hand on him; for he is the anointed of the LORD." With these words David sharply rebuked his men and did not allow them to attack Saul. And Saul left the cave and went his way. Then David went out of the cave and called out to Saul, "My lord the king!" When Saul looked behind him, David bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground. He said to Saul, "…This day you have seen with your own eyes how the LORD delivered you into my hands in the cave. Some urged me to kill you, but I spared you; I said, '…he is the LORD's anointed.' …look at this piece of your robe in my hand! I cut off the corner of your robe but did not kill you. See that there is nothing in my hand to indicate that I am guilty of wrongdoing or rebellion. I have not wronged you, but you are hunting me down to take my life. May the LORD judge between you and me.*

And may the LORD avenge the wrongs you have done to me, but my hand will not touch you... Saul asked, "Is that your voice, David my son?" And he wept aloud. "You are more righteous than I… You have treated me well, but I have treated you badly... May the LORD reward you well for the way you treated me today... I know that you will surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hands. Now swear to me by the LORD that you will not kill off my descendants or wipe out my name from my father's family." So, David gave his oath to Saul. Then Saul returned home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

- David and Nabal (25). *While David was in the wilderness, he heard that Nabal was shearing sheep. So, he sent… ten men and said to them… Say to him: '…When your shepherds were with us, we did not mistreat them, and the whole time they were at Carmel nothing of theirs was missing... Therefore, be favorable toward my men… Please give your servants and your son David whatever you can find for them.'" Nabal answered David's servants, "Who is this David? …Why should I take my bread and water, and the meat I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men coming from who knows where?" David's men turned around and… reported every word. David said to his men, "Each of you strap on your sword!" …About four hundred men went up with David, while two hundred stayed with the supplies. One of the servants told Abigail, Nabal's wife, "David sent messengers from the wilderness to give our master his greetings, but he hurled insults at them. Yet these men were very good to us…" Abigail acted quickly. She took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five dressed sheep, five seahs* (about 60 pounds) *of roasted grain, a hundred cakes of raisins and two hundred cakes of pressed figs and loaded them on donkeys. Then she told her servants, "Go on ahead; I'll follow you." But she did not tell her husband… As she came riding her donkey into a mountain ravine, there were David and his men descending toward her, and she met them... She fell at his feet and said: "Pardon your servant, my lord, and let me speak to you… Please pay no attention, my lord, to that wicked man Nabal... his name means Fool, and folly goes with him... let this gift, which your servant has brought to my lord, be given to the men who follow you... David said to Abigail, "Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me. May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day…" Then David accepted from her hand what she had brought*

him and said, "Go home in peace..." When Abigail went to Nabal, he was in the house holding a banquet like that of a king. He was in high spirits and very drunk. So, she told him nothing at all until daybreak. Then in the morning, when Nabal was sober, his wife told him all these things, and his heart failed him, and he became like a stone. About ten days later, the LORD struck Nabal, and he died... Then David sent word to Abigail, asking her to become his wife... Abigail quickly got on a donkey and, attended by her five female servants, went with David's messengers and became his wife. David had also married Ahinoam of Jezreel, and they both were his wives. But Saul had given his daughter Michal, David's wife, to Paltiel… who was from Gallim.

- David spared Saul's life a second time (26). *Saul went down to the Desert of Ziph, with his three thousand select Israelite troops, to search there for David. Saul made his camp beside the road on the hill of Hakilah facing Jeshimon, but David stayed in the wilderness… Then David set out and went to the place where Saul had camped. He saw where Saul and Abner… the commander of the army, had lain down. Saul was lying inside the camp, with the army encamped around him... David and Abishai went to the army by night, and there was Saul, lying asleep inside the camp with his spear stuck in the ground near his head. Abner and the soldiers were lying around him.*

  Abishai said to David, "Today God has delivered your enemy into your hands. Now let me pin him to the ground with one thrust of the spear; I won't strike him twice." But David said to Abishai, "Don't destroy him! Who can lay a hand on the LORD's anointed and be guiltless? …the LORD himself will strike him, or his time will come, and he will die, or he will go into battle and perish. But the LORD forbid that I should lay a hand on the LORD's anointed. Now get the spear and water jug that are near his head, and let's go."

  So, David took the spear and water jug near Saul's head, and they left. No one saw or knew about it, nor did anyone wake up. They were all sleeping because the LORD had put them into a deep sleep. Then David crossed over to the other side and stood on top of the hill some distance away… He called out to the army and to Abner… Abner replied, "Who are you who calls to the king?" David said, "...Why didn't you guard your lord the king? Someone came to destroy your lord the king. What you have done is not good. As surely as the LORD lives, you and your men must die, because you did not guard your master, the LORD's anointed. Look around you. Where are the king's

spear and water jug that were near his head?"

Saul recognized David's voice and said, "Is that your voice, David my son?" David replied, "Yes it is, my lord the king... Why is my lord pursuing his servant? What have I done, and what wrong am I guilty of?" Then Saul said, "I have sinned. Come back, David my son. Because you considered my life precious today, I will not try to harm you again..." "Here is the king's spear," David answered. "... The LORD delivered you into my hands today, but I would not lay a hand on the LORD's anointed..." Then Saul said to David, "May you be blessed, David my son; you will do great things and surely triumph." So David went on his way, and Saul returned home.

- David lived among the Philistines (27). *David thought to himself, "One of these days I will be destroyed by the hand of Saul. The best thing I can do is to escape to the land of the Philistines. Then Saul will give up searching for me anywhere in Israel, and I will slip out of his hand." So, David and the six hundred men with him left and went over to Achish… king of Gath. David and his men settled in Gath with Achish. Each man had his family with him, and David had his two wives: Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail of Carmel, the widow of Nabal.*

When Saul was told that David had fled to Gath, he no longer searched for him. Then David said to Achish, "If I have found favor in your eyes, let a place be assigned to me in one of the country towns, that I may live there. Why should your servant live in the royal city with you?" So on that day Achish gave him Ziklag, and it has belonged to the kings of Judah ever since. David lived in Philistine territory a year and four months.

Now David and his men went up and raided the Geshurites, the Girzites and the Amalekites... Whenever David attacked an area, he did not leave a man or woman alive, but took sheep and cattle, donkeys, and camels, and clothes. Then he returned to Achish... He did not leave a man or woman alive to be brought to Gath, for he thought, "They might inform on us… And such was his practice as long as he lived in Philistine territory. Achish trusted David and said to himself, "He has become so obnoxious to his people, the Israelites, that he will be my servant for life."

In those days the Philistines gathered their forces to fight against Israel. Achish said to David, "You must understand that you and your men will accompany me in the army." David said, "Then you will see for yourself what your servant can do." Achish replied, "Very well, I will make you my bodyguard for life."

- Saul consulted a sorceress at Endor (28).
  *Remember, Exodus 22:18, *"Do not allow a sorceress to live."*.

  The Philistines assembled and came and set up camp at Shunem, while Saul gathered all Israel and set up camp at Gilboa. When Saul saw the Philistine army, he was afraid; terror filled his heart. He inquired of the LORD, but the LORD did not answer him… Saul then said to his attendants, "Find me a woman who is a medium, so I may go and inquire of her." "There is one in Endor," they said. So, Saul disguised himself… and at night he and two men went to the woman... Then the woman asked, "Whom shall I bring up for you?" "Bring up Samuel," he said. …The woman said, "I see a ghostly figure coming up out of the earth... An old man wearing a robe is coming up…" Then Saul knew it was Samuel, and he bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground. Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" "I am in great distress," Saul said. "The Philistines are fighting against me, and God has departed from me. He no longer answers me, either by prophets or by dreams. So, I have called on you to tell me what to do." Samuel said, "…The LORD has done what he predicted through me. The LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hands and given it to… David. Because you did not obey the LORD… [he] will deliver both Israel and you into the hands of the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons will be with me... Immediately Saul fell full length on the ground, filled with fear…
- David went back to Ziklag (29) *The Philistines gathered all their forces at Aphek, and Israel camped by the spring in Jezreel. As the Philistine rulers marched with their units of hundreds and thousands, David and his men were marching at the rear with Achish... the Philistine commanders were angry with Achish and said, "Send the man back, that he may return to the place you assigned him. He must not go with us into battle, or he will turn against us during the fighting... So Achish called David and said to him, "…get up early, along with your master's servants who have come with you and leave in the morning as soon as it is light." So, David and his men got up early in the morning to go back to the land of the Philistines, and the Philistines went up to Jezreel.*

  David and his men reached Ziklag on the third day. Now the Amalekites had raided the Negev and Ziklag... When David and his men reached Ziklag, they found it destroyed by fire and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive. So, David and his men wept aloud until they had no

strength left to weep... But David found strength in the LORD his God... David and the six hundred men with him came to the Besor Valley, where some stayed behind… They found an Egyptian in a field… David asked him, "…Where do you come from?" He said, "I am an Egyptian, the slave of an Amalekite. My master abandoned me when I became ill three days ago. We raided the Negev… And we burned Ziklag." David asked him, "Can you lead me down to this raiding party?" …He led David down, and there they were, scattered over the countryside, eating, drinking and reveling because of the great amount of plunder they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from Judah. David fought them from dusk until the evening of the next day, and none of them got away, except four hundred young men who rode off on camels and fled. David recovered everything the Amalekites had taken, including his two wives... He took all the flocks and herds, and his men drove them ahead of the other livestock, saying, "This is David's plunder." Then David came to the two hundred men who had been too exhausted to follow him and who were left behind at the Besor Valley... As David and his men approached... all the evil men and troublemakers among David's followers said, "Because they did not go out with us, we will not share with them the plunder we recovered…" David replied, "No, my brothers, you must not do that with what the LORD has given us. He has protected us and delivered into our hands the raiding party that came against us... The share of the man who stayed with the supplies is to be the same as that of him who went down to the battle. All will share alike." …When David reached Ziklag, he sent some of the plunder to the elders of Judah, who were his friends, saying, "Here is a gift for you from the plunder of the LORD's enemies."

- Saul took his own life (31). *Now the Philistines fought against Israel; the Israelites fled before them, and many fell dead on Mount Gilboa. The Philistines were in hot pursuit of Saul and his sons, and they killed his sons Jonathan, Abinadab and Malki-Shua. The fighting grew fierce around Saul, and when the archers overtook him, they wounded him critically. Saul said to his armor-bearer, "Draw your sword and run me through, or these uncircumcised fellows will come and run me through and abuse me." But his armor-bearer was terrified and would not do it; so Saul took his own sword and fell on it. When the armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he too fell on his sword and died with him... When the Israelites along the valley and those across the Jordan saw that the Israelite army had fled and that*

Saul and his sons had died, they abandoned their towns and fled. And the Philistines came and occupied them.

The next day, when the Philistines came to strip the dead, they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. They cut off his head and stripped off his armor, and they sent messengers throughout the land of the Philistines to proclaim the news… They put his armor in the temple of the Ashtoreths and fastened his body to the wall of Beth Shan. When the people of Jabesh Gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, all their valiant men marched through the night to Beth Shan. They took down the bodies of Saul and his sons from the wall of Beth Shan and went to Jabesh, where they burned them. Then they took their bones and buried them under a tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and they fasted seven days.



2ND SAMUEL

- The Book The book of 2nd Samuel is the "Book of David's Reign."
- It covers 40 years beginning with David's ascension after Saul's death and ending just before David's death.
- The book was most likely written by Nathan and Gad. *As for the events of King David's reign, from beginning to end, they are written in the records of Samuel the seer, the records of Nathan the prophet and the records of Gad the seer, together with the details of his reign and power, and the circumstances that surrounded him and Israel and the kingdoms of all the other lands.* (1 Chronicles 29:29–30)

OUTLINE

- David's Triumphs (Chapters 1–10).
    - At first, David only reigned over Judah with Hebron as his capital (1-4).
        - The report of Saul's death. *After the death of Saul, David returned from striking down the Amalekites and stayed in Ziklag two days. On the third day a man arrived from Saul's camp with his clothes torn and dust on his head. When he came to David, he fell to the ground to pay him honor... "I have escaped from the Israelite camp... The men fled from the battle… Many of them fell… Saul and his son Jonathan are dead." Then David said to the young man… "How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?" "I happened to be on Mount Gilboa," the young man said, "and there was Saul, leaning on his spear, with the chariots and their drivers in hot pursuit. When he turned around and saw me, he called out to me… Then he said to me, 'Stand here by me and kill me! …So, I stood beside him and killed him, because I knew …he could not survive. And I took the crown that was on his head and the band on his arm and have brought them here to my lord."*

          Then David and all the men with him took hold of their clothes and tore them. They mourned and wept and fasted till evening for Saul and his son Jonathan, and for the army of the LORD and for the nation of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword. David said to the young man who brought him the report, "…Why weren't you afraid to lift your hand to destroy the LORD's anointed?" Then David called one of his men and said, "Go, strike him down!" So, he struck him down, and he died... David had said to him, "Your blood be on your own head. Your own mouth testified against you when you said, 'I killed the LORD's anointed.'"
        - *…David inquired of the LORD. "Shall I go up to one of the towns of Judah?" The LORD said, "Go up." David asked,*

"Where shall I go?" "To Hebron," the LORD answered. So, David went up there with his two wives, Ahinoam… and Abigail… David also took the men who were with him, each with his family, and they settled in Hebron and its towns. Then the men of Judah came to Hebron, and there they anointed David king over the tribe of Judah...

- David reigned over Judah from Hebron seven years and six months because the other tribes would not accept him as Saul's successor. It was a period of civil war between the house of Saul and the house of David (2).
    - *Abner… the commander of Saul's army, had taken* Ish-Bosheth *son of Saul… He made him king over Gilead, Ashuri and Jezreel, and also over Ephraim, Benjamin and all Israel. Ish-Bosheth… was forty years old when he became king over Israel, and he reigned two years. The tribe of Judah, however, remained loyal to David...*
    - *Abner… together with the men of Ish-Bosheth… went to Gibeon. Joab… and David's men went out and met them at the pool of Gibeon. One group sat down on one side of the pool and one group on the other side.*

      Then Abner said to Joab, "Let's have some of the young men get up and fight hand to hand in front of us." "All right, let them do it," Joab said. So, they stood up and were counted off—twelve men for Benjamin and Ish-Bosheth… and twelve for David. Then each man grabbed his opponent by the head and thrust his dagger into his opponent's side, and they fell down together... The battle that day was very fierce, and Abner and the Israelites were defeated by David's men. The three sons of Zeruiah were there: Joab, Abishai and Asahel. Asahel was as fleet-footed as a wild gazelle. He chased Abner, turning neither to the right nor to the left as he pursued him... Then Abner said to him, "Turn aside to the right or to the left… But Asahel would not stop chasing him. Again, Abner warned Asahel, "Stop chasing me! ...How could I look your brother Joab in the face?" But Asahel refused to give up the pursuit; so, Abner thrust the butt of his spear into Asahel's stomach, and the spear came out through his back. He fell there and died on the spot. And every man stopped when he came to the place where Asahel had fallen and died. But Joab and Abishai pursued Abner… Then the men of Benjamin rallied behind Abner... Abner called out to Joab, "Must the sword devour forever? …How

long before you order your men to stop pursuing their fellow Israelites?" ...So, Joab blew the trumpet, and all the troops came to a halt… They took Asahel and buried him in his father's tomb at Bethlehem.

- *The war between the house of Saul and the house of David lasted a long time. David grew stronger and stronger, while the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker.*
- Abner turned to David, but Joab murdered Abner (3)

Now Saul had had a concubine named Rizpah… And Ish-Bosheth said to Abner, "Why did you sleep with my father's concubine?" Abner was very angry because of what Ish-Bosheth said… Then Abner sent messengers on his behalf to say to David, "…Make an agreement with me, and I will help you bring all Israel over to you." "Good," said David. "I will make an agreement with you. But I demand one thing of you: Do not come into my presence unless you bring Michal, daughter of Saul when you come to see me." Then David sent messengers to Ish-Bosheth… "Give me my wife Michal…" So, Ish-Bosheth gave orders and had her taken away from her husband Paltiel… Abner conferred with the elders of Israel and said, "For some time you have wanted to make David your king. Now do it!" ...Abner also spoke to the Benjamites in person. Then he went to Hebron to tell David everything that Israel and the whole tribe of Benjamin wanted to do... Then Abner said to David, "Let me go at once and assemble all Israel for my lord the king, so that they may make a covenant with you, and that you may rule over all that your heart desires." So, David sent Abner away, and he went in peace.

Just then David's men and Joab returned from a raid and brought with them a great deal of plunder... When Joab and all the soldiers with him arrived, he was told that Abner… had come to the king and that the king had sent him away and that he had gone in peace. So, Joab went to the king and said, "What have you done? You know Abner… he came to deceive you and observe your movements and find out everything you are doing." Joab then left David and sent messengers after Abner, and they brought him back… when Abner returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside into an inner chamber, as if to speak with him privately. And there, to avenge the blood of his brother Asahel, Joab stabbed him in the stomach,

and he died...

...when David heard about this, he said, "I and my kingdom are forever innocent before the LORD concerning the blood of Abner… May Joab's family never be without someone who has a running sore or leprosy or who leans on a crutch or who falls by the sword or who lacks food." ...Then David said to Joab and all the people with him, "Tear your clothes and put on sackcloth and walk in mourning in front of Abner." King David himself walked behind the bier. They buried Abner in Hebron, and the king wept aloud at Abner's tomb. All the people wept also...

- The death of Ish-Bosheth (4).

When Ish-Bosheth… heard that Abner had died in Hebron, he lost courage, and all Israel became alarmed. [Ish Bosheth] had two men who were leaders of raiding bands... Baanah and… Rekab… Rekab and Baanah… set out for the house of Ish-Bosheth, and they arrived… he was taking his noonday rest. They went into the inner part of the house as if to get some wheat, and they stabbed him in the stomach... they cut off his head... they traveled all night… [and] brought the head of Ish-Bosheth to David at Hebron and said to the king, "Here is the head of Ish-Bosheth son of Saul, your enemy, who tried to kill you..." David answered… "As surely as the LORD lives… when someone told me, 'Saul is dead,' and thought he was bringing good news, I seized him and put him to death in Ziklag. ...How much more—when wicked men have killed an innocent man in his own house and on his own bed—should I not now demand his blood from your hand and rid the earth of you!" So, David gave an order to his men, and they killed them. They cut off their hands and feet and hung the bodies by the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-Bosheth and buried it in Abner's tomb at Hebron.

- David was crowned king over all Israel at Hebron (5:1-4).
- David conquered Jerusalem, taking it from the Jebusites 5:6 -12).

The king and his men marched to Jerusalem to attack the Jebusites, who lived there. ...They thought, "David cannot get in here." Nevertheless, David captured the fortress of Zion—which is the City of David... David then took up residence in the fortress and called it the City of David... Hiram king of Tyre sent envoys to David, along with cedar logs and carpenters and stonemasons, and they built a pal-

ace for David. Then David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel and had exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel.

- David defeated the Philistines (5:17-25).

  When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over Israel, they went up in full force to search for him, but David heard about it and went down to the stronghold... So, David went to Baal Perazim, and there he defeated them... Once more the Philistines came up and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim; so David inquired of the LORD, and he answered, "Do not go straight up, but circle around behind them and attack them in front of the poplar trees. As soon as you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the poplar trees, move quickly, because that will mean the LORD has gone out in front of you to strike the Philistine army." So David did as the LORD commanded him, and he struck down the Philistines all the way from Gibeon to Gezer.

- The Ark was brought to Jerusalem (6).

  David ...and all his men went to Baalah in Judah to bring up from there the ark of God… They set the ark of God on a new cart and brought it from the house of Abinadab… Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, were guiding the new cart with the ark of God on it, and Ahio was walking in front of it. David and all Israel were celebrating with all their might before the LORD… When they came to the threshing floor of Nakon, Uzzah reached out and took hold of the ark of God, because the oxen stumbled... God struck him down, and he died there beside the ark of God. Then David was angry because the LORD's wrath had broken out against Uzzah… David was afraid of the LORD that day and said, "How can the ark of the LORD ever come to me?" He was not willing to take the ark of the LORD to be with him in the City of David. Instead, he took it to the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. The ark of the LORD remained [for three months].

  David was told, "The LORD has blessed the household of Obed-Edom and everything he has, because of the ark of God." So, David went to bring up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David… When those who were carrying the ark of the LORD had taken six steps, he sacrificed a bull and a fattened calf. Wearing a linen ephod, David was dancing before the LORD with all his might, while he and all Israel were bringing up the ark of the LORD with shouts and the sound of trumpets. As the ark of the LORD was entering the City of David, Michal… watched from a window. And when she saw King David

leaping and dancing before the LORD, she despised him in her heart.

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

When David returned home to bless his household, Michal daughter of Saul came out to meet him and said, "How the king of Israel has distinguished himself today, going around half-naked in full view of the slave girls of his servants as any vulgar fellow would!" David said to Michal, "It was before the LORD, who chose me rather than your father or anyone from his house when he appointed me ruler over the LORD's people Israel—I will celebrate before the LORD. I will become even more undignified than this…" And Michal …had no children to the day of her death.

- The Davidic Covenant (7).
    - David wanted to build a permanent temple in Jerusalem, but God told him, *When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you… He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.* (7:12-13)
    - God promised David:
        - *I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth.*
        - *I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed.*
        - *I will also give you rest from all your enemies.*
        - *Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.*
- David defeated the *Philistines, Moabites, Arameans, Amalekites,* and *Ammonites*; and established a government *doing what was just and right for all his people* (8).
- David showed kindness to Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, restoring all Saul's land to him and giving him a permanent place at the king's table (9).
- David defeated the Ammonites again (10).

- *… the king of the Ammonites died, and his son Hanun succeeded him as king.*
- *…David sent a delegation to express his sympathy to Hanun concerning his father... Hanun seized David's envoys, shaved off half of each man's beard, cut off their garments at the buttocks, and sent them away.*
- *…When the Ammonites realized that they had become obnoxious to David, they hired twenty thousand Aramean foot soldiers… as well as the king of Maakah with a thousand men, and also twelve thousand men from Tob.*
- *David sent Joab out with the entire army of fighting men. The Ammonites came out and drew up in battle formation at the entrance of their city gate, while the Arameans of Zobah and Rehob and the men of Tob and Maakah were by themselves in the open country. Joab saw that there were battle lines in front of him and behind him; so, he selected some of the best troops in Israel and deployed them against the Arameans. He put the rest of the men under the command of Abishai his brother and deployed them against the Ammonites... Then Joab and the troops with him advanced to fight the Arameans, and they fled before him. When the Ammonites realized that the Arameans were fleeing, they fled before Abishai and went inside the city. So, Joab returned from fighting the Ammonites and came to Jerusalem.*
- *After the Arameans saw that they had been routed by Israel, they regrouped. Hadadezer had Arameans brought from beyond the Euphrates River; they went to Helam, with Shobak the commander of Hadadezer's army leading them. When David was told of this, he gathered all Israel, crossed the Jordan and went to Helam. The Arameans formed their battle lines to meet David and fought against him. But they fled before Israel, and David killed seven hundred of their charioteers and forty thousand of their foot soldiers. He also struck down Shobak the commander of their army, and he died there. When all the kings who were vassals of Hadadezer saw that they had been routed by Israel, they made peace with the Israelites and became subject to them. So, the Arameans were afraid to help the Ammonites anymore.*

- David's Tragedy (11-12).
  - Sin (11:1-5).

In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem. One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, and David sent

someone to find out about her. The man said, "She is Bathsheba… the wife of Uriah the Hittite." Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her... The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant."

- Coverup (11:5-27).

So David sent this word to Joab: "Send me Uriah the Hittite." …When Uriah came to him, David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were and how the war was going. Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." So, Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the king was sent after him. But Uriah slept at the entrance to the palace with all his master's servants and did not go down to his house.

David was told, "Uriah did not go home." So, he asked Uriah, "Haven't you just come from a military campaign? Why didn't you go home?" Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents, and my commander Joab and my lord's men are camped in the open country. How could I go to my house to eat and drink and make love to my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!" Then David said to him, "Stay here one more day, and tomorrow I will send you back." So, Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. At David's invitation, he ate and drank with him, and David made him drunk. But in the evening Uriah went out to sleep on his mat among his master's servants; he did not go home.

In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. In it he wrote, "Put Uriah out in front where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die." So, while Joab had the city under siege, he put Uriah at a place where he knew the strongest defenders were. When the men of the city came out and fought against Joab, some of the men in David's army fell; moreover, Uriah the Hittite died. Joab sent David a full account of the battle… "Moreover, your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead."

When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the LORD.

- Confrontation (12:1-12).

The LORD sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, "There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup, and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him. Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to

him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him."

David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this must die! He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity."

Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you all Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. Why did you despise the word of the LORD by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own… Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity on you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will sleep with your wives in broad daylight. You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.'"

- Repentance (12:13)
  *See Psalm 51.

  Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."
- Consequences (12:13-25).

  Nathan replied, "The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. But because by doing this you have shown utter contempt for the LORD, the son born to you will die."

  After Nathan had gone home, the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and he became ill. David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and spent the nights lying in sackcloth on the ground. The elders of his household stood beside him to get him up from the ground, but he refused, and he would not eat any food with them. On the seventh day the child died. David's attendants were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they thought, "While the child was still living, he wouldn't listen to us when we spoke to him. How can we now tell him the child is dead? He may do something desperate." David noticed that his attendants were whispering among themselves, and he realized the child was dead. "Is the child dead?" he asked. "Yes," they replied, "he is dead."

  Then David got up from the ground. After he had washed, put on lotions, and changed his clothes, he went into the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then he went to his own house, and at his request they served him food, and he ate. His attendants asked

him, "Why are you acting this way? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept, but now that the child is dead, you get up and eat!" He answered, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. I thought, 'Who knows? The LORD may be gracious to me and let the child live.' But now that he is dead, why should I go on fasting? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me." Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba, and he went to her and made love to her. She gave birth to a son, and they named him Solomon. The LORD loved him; and because the LORD loved him, he sent word through Nathan the prophet to name him Jedidiah.

- David's Troubles (Chapters 13–24).
  *As a result of David's sin, God said, *"Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity on you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will sleep with your wives in broad daylight. You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel."* (12:11-12)
  - Absalom killed Amnon for raping Tamar. *Amnon son of David* (with Ahinoam – 3:2) *fell in love with Tamar, the beautiful sister of Absalom son of David* (with Maacah – 3:3). *Amnon became so obsessed with his sister Tamar that he made himself ill… Amnon had an adviser named Jonadab son of Shimeah, David's brother. Jonadab was a very shrewd man. He asked Amnon, "Why do you, the king's son, look so haggard morning after morning? Won't you tell me?" Amnon said to him, "I'm in love with Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister." "Go to bed and pretend to be ill," Jonadab said. "When your father comes to see you, say to him, 'I would like my sister Tamar to come and give me something to eat. Let her prepare the food in my sight so I may watch her and then eat it from her hand.'"*

    So, Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill. When the king came to see him, Amnon said to him, "I would like my sister Tamar to come and make some special bread in my sight, so I may eat from her hand." David sent word to Tamar at the palace: "Go to the house of your brother Amnon and prepare some food for him." So, Tamar went to the house of her brother Amnon, who was lying down... "Send everyone out of here," Amnon said. So, everyone left him... Tamar took the bread she had prepared and brought it to her brother Amnon in his bedroom. But when she took it to him to eat, he grabbed her and said, "Come to bed with me, my sister." "No, my brother!" she said to him. "Don't force me! Such a thing should not be done in Israel! Don't do this wicked thing..." But he refused to listen to her, and since he was stronger than she, he raped her.

    Then Amnon hated her with intense hatred... He called his personal servant and said, "Get this woman out of my sight and bolt the door after her."

…Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the ornate robe she was wearing. She put her hands on her head and went away, weeping aloud as she went...

Two years later, when Absalom's sheepshearers were at Baal Hazor near the border of Ephraim, he invited all the king's sons to come there... Absalom ordered his men, "Listen! When Amnon is in high spirits from drinking wine and I say to you, 'Strike Amnon down,' then kill him..." So, Absalom's men did to Amnon what Absalom had ordered... Then Absalom fled…

- After a time, *Joab* finally persuaded David to let Absalom return to Jerusalem (14:23-33).

Then Joab went to Geshur and brought Absalom back to Jerusalem. But the king said, "He must go to his own house; he must not see my face." So, Absalom went to his own house… In all Israel there was not a man so highly praised for his handsome appearance as Absalom... he used to cut his hair once a year because it became too heavy for him—he would weigh it, and its weight was two hundred shekels (about 5 pounds)… *Three sons and a daughter were born to Absalom. His daughter's name was Tamar, and she became a beautiful woman.*

Absalom lived two years in Jerusalem without seeing the king's face. Then Absalom sent for Joab in order to send him to the king, but Joab refused to come to him. So, he sent a second time, but he refused to come. Then he said to his servants, "Look, Joab's field is next to mine, and he has barley there. Go and set it on fire." So, Absalom's servants set the field on fire. Then Joab did go to Absalom's house, and he said to him, "Why have your servants set my field on fire?" Absalom said to Joab, "Look, I sent word to you and said, 'Come here so I can send you to the king to ask, Why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me if I were still there! …I want to see the king's face, and if I am guilty of anything, let him put me to death." So Joab went to the king and told him this. Then the king summoned Absalom, and he came in and bowed down with his face to the ground before the king. And the king kissed Absalom.

- Absalom attempted to overthrow David (15-19).

...Absalom provided himself with a chariot and horses and with fifty men to run ahead of him. He would get up early and stand by the side of the road leading to the city gate. Whenever anyone came with a complaint to be placed before the king for a decision, Absalom would call out to him, "What town are you from?" He would answer, "Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel." Then Absalom would say to him, "Look, your claims are valid and proper, but there is no representative of the king to hear you." And Absalom would add, "If only I were appointed judge in the land! Then everyone who has a complaint or case could come to me and I would see that they receive justice." Also,

whenever anyone approached him to bow down before him, Absalom would reach out his hand, take hold of him and kiss him. Absalom behaved in this way toward all the Israelites who came to the king asking for justice, and so he stole the hearts of the people of Israel...

At the end of four years, Absalom said to the king, "Let me go to Hebron and fulfill a vow I made to the LORD… 'If the LORD takes me back to Jerusalem, I will worship the LORD in Hebron.'" The king said to him, "Go in peace." So, he went to Hebron. Then Absalom sent secret messengers throughout the tribes of Israel to say, "As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpets, then say, 'Absalom is king in Hebron.'" ... And so… Absalom's following kept on increasing.

A messenger came and told David, "The hearts of the people of Israel are with Absalom." Then David said to all his officials who were with him in Jerusalem, "Come! We must flee, or none of us will escape from Absalom... The king set out, with his entire household following him; but he left ten concubines to take care of the palace... The whole countryside wept aloud as all the people passed by... David continued up the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went; his head was covered and he was barefoot… As King David approached Bahurim, a man from the same clan as Saul… came out… Shimei… He pelted David and all the king's officials with stones, though all the troops and the special guard were on David's right and left. As he cursed, Shimei said, "Get out, get out, you murderer, you scoundrel! The LORD has repaid you for all the blood you shed in the household of Saul, in whose place you have reigned. The LORD has given the kingdom into the hands of your son Absalom. You have come to ruin because you are a murderer!" Then Abishai… "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over and cut off his head." But the king said, "...My son, my own flesh and blood, is trying to kill me. How much more, then, this Benjamite! Leave him alone; let him curse, for the LORD has told him to. It may be that the LORD will look upon my misery and restore to me his covenant blessing instead of his curse today." ...The king and all the people with him arrived at their destination exhausted.

...Meanwhile, Absalom and all the men of Israel came to Jerusalem… and Ahithophel was with him... Absalom said to Ahithophel, "Give us your advice. What should we do?" Ahithophel answered, "Sleep with your father's concubines whom he left to take care of the palace. Then all Israel will hear that you have made yourself obnoxious to your father, and the hands of everyone with you will be more resolute." So, they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof, and he slept with his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel...

...Ahithophel said to Absalom, "I would choose twelve thousand men and set out tonight in pursuit of David. I would attack him while he is weary and weak. I would strike him with terror, and then all the people with him will flee. I would strike down only the king and bring all the people back to you. The death of the man you seek will mean the return of all…" But Absalom said, "Summon also Hushai the Arkite, so we can hear what he has to say as well." Hushai replied to Absalom, "The advice Ahithophel has given is not good this time. You know your father and his men; they are fighters, and as fierce as a wild bear robbed of her cubs. Besides, your father is an experienced fighter… Even now, he is hidden in a cave or some other place... So, I advise you: Let all Israel… be gathered to you, with you yourself leading them into battle. Then we will attack him wherever he may be found, and we will fall on him as dew settles on the ground...

...David and all the people with him set out and crossed the Jordan. By daybreak, no one was left who had not crossed the Jordan. When Ahithophel saw that his advice had not been followed, he saddled his donkey and set out for his ...hometown. He put his house in order and then hanged himself... Absalom crossed the Jordan with all the men of Israel... David mustered the men who were with him and appointed over them commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds. David sent out his troops, a third under the command of Joab, a third under Joab's brother Abishai… and a third under Ittai the Gittite. ...The king commanded Joab, Abishai and Ittai, "Be gentle with the young man Absalom for my sake." ...David's army marched out of the city to fight Israel, and the battle took place in the forest of Ephraim. There Israel's troops were routed by David's men… Absalom happened to meet David's men. He was riding his mule, and as the mule went under the thick branches of a large oak, Absalom's hair got caught in the tree. He was left hanging in midair, while the mule he was riding kept on going. When one of the men saw what had happened, he told Joab… [Joab] took three javelins in his hand and plunged them into Absalom's heart while Absalom was still alive in the oak tree. And ten of Joab's armor-bearers surrounded Absalom, struck him, and killed him. Then Joab sounded the trumpet, and the troops stopped pursuing Israel… They took Absalom, threw him into a big pit in the forest and piled up a large heap of rocks over him. Meanwhile, all the Israelites fled to their homes.

Then Joab said to a Cushite, "Go, tell the king what you have seen." The Cushite bowed down before Joab and ran off. ...Then Ahimaaz ran by way of the plain and outran the Cushite... Ahimaaz called out to the king, "All is well!" He bowed down before the king with his face to the ground and said, "Praise be to the LORD your God! He has delivered up those who lifted their

hands against my lord the king." ...Then the Cushite arrived and said, "My lord the king, hear the good news! The LORD has vindicated you today by delivering you from the hand of all who rose up against you." The king asked the Cushite, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" The Cushite replied, "May the enemies of my lord the king and all who rise up to harm you be like that young man." The king was shaken. He went up to the room over the gateway and wept. As he went, he said: "O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you—O Absalom, my son, my son!" Joab was told, "The king is weeping and mourning for Absalom." And for the whole army the victory that day was turned into mourning, because on that day the troops heard it said, "The king is grieving for his son."

Then Joab went into the house to the king and said, "Today you have humiliated all your men, who have just saved your life and the lives of your sons and daughters and the lives of your wives and concubines. You love those who hate you and hate those who love you. You have made it clear today that the commanders and their men mean nothing to you. I see that you would be pleased if Absalom were alive today and all of us were dead... Meanwhile, the Israelites had fled to their homes.

- Sheba's rebellion (19:9-43).

Throughout the tribes of Israel, all the people were arguing among themselves, saying, "The king delivered us from the hand of our enemies; he is the one who rescued us from the hand of the Philistines. But now he has fled the country to escape from Absalom; and Absalom, whom we anointed to rule over us, has died in battle..." King David sent this message to Zadok and Abiathar, the priests: "Ask the elders of Judah, '...why should you be the last to bring back the king?' ...He won over the hearts of the men of Judah so that they were all of one mind. They sent word to the king, "Return, you and all your men." Then the king returned and went as far as the Jordan.

Now the men of Judah had come to Gilgal to go out and meet the king and bring him across the Jordan. Shimei… the Benjamite… hurried down with the men of Judah to meet King David. With him were a thousand Benjamites… They rushed to the Jordan, where the king was... Shimei… fell prostrate before the king and said to him, "May my lord not hold me guilty. Do not remember how your servant did wrong on the day my lord the king left Jerusalem… For I your servant know that I have sinned…" Then Abishai… said, "Shouldn't Shimei be put to death for this? He cursed the LORD's anointed." David replied, "...Should anyone be put to death in Israel today? Don't I know that today I am king over Israel?" So, the king said to Shimei, "You shall not die."

...Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson, also went down to meet the king. He had not taken care of his feet or trimmed his mustache or

washed his clothes from the day the king left until the day he returned safely. When he came from Jerusalem to meet the king, the king asked him, "Why didn't you go with me, Mephibosheth?" He said, "My lord the king, since I your servant am lame, I said, 'I will have my donkey saddled and will ride on it, so I can go with the king.' But Ziba my servant betrayed me. And he has slandered your servant to my lord the king... so, do whatever you wish... The king said to him, "Why say more? I order you and Ziba to divide the land." Mephibosheth said to the king, "Let him take everything, now that my lord the king has returned home safely."

...So, all the people crossed the Jordan, and then the king crossed over... All the troops of Judah and half the troops of Israel had taken the king over. Soon all the men of Israel were coming to the king and saying to him, "Why did our brothers, the men of Judah, steal the king away and bring him and his household across the Jordan, together with all his men?" All the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, "We did this because the king is closely related to us. Why are you angry about it? Have we eaten any of the king's provisions? Have we taken anything for ourselves?" ... Now a troublemaker named Sheba… a Benjamite, happened to be there. He sounded the trumpet and shouted, "We have no share in David, no part in Jesse's son! Every man to his tent, Israel!" So all the men of Israel deserted David to follow Sheba… But the men of Judah stayed by their king all the way from the Jordan to Jerusalem.

...When David returned to his palace in Jerusalem, he took the ten concubines he had left to take care of the palace and put them in a house under guard. He provided for them… Then the king said to Amasa, "Summon the men of Judah to come to me within three days and be here yourself." But when Amasa went to summon Judah, he took longer than the time the king had set for him. David said to Abishai, "Now Sheba… will do us more harm than Absalom did. Take your master's men and pursue him, or he will find fortified cities and escape from us."

So, Joab's men and the Kerethites and Pelethites and all the mighty warriors went out under the command of Abishai. They marched out from Jerusalem to pursue Sheba… Amasa came to meet them. Joab was wearing his military tunic, and strapped over it at his waist was a belt with a dagger in its sheath. As he stepped forward, it dropped out of its sheath. Joab said to Amasa, "How are you, my brother?" Then Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him. Amasa was not on his guard against the dagger in Joab's hand, and Joab plunged it into his belly, and his intestines spilled out on the ground. Without being stabbed again, Amasa died. Then Joab and his brother Abishai pursued Sheba… One of Joab's men stood beside Amasa and said, "Whoever favors Joab, and whoever is for David, let him

follow Joab!" Amasa lay wallowing in his blood in the middle of the road, and the man saw that all the troops came to a halt there. When he realized that everyone who came up to Amasa stopped, he dragged him from the road into a field and threw a garment over him. After Amasa had been removed from the road, everyone went on with Joab to pursue Sheba…

Sheba passed through all the tribes of Israel to Abel Beth Maakah and through the entire region of the Bikrites, who gathered together and followed him. All the troops with Joab came and besieged Sheba in Abel Beth Maakah. They built a siege ramp up to the city, and it stood against the outer fortifications. While they were battering the wall to bring it down, a wise woman called from the city… "…We are the peaceful and faithful in Israel... Why do you want to swallow up the LORD's inheritance?" ... Joab replied "Far be it from me to swallow up or destroy! … A man named Sheba… from the hill country of Ephraim, has lifted up his hand against the king… Hand over this one man, and I'll withdraw from the city." The woman said to Joab, "His head will be thrown to you from the wall." Then the woman went to all the people with her wise advice, and they cut off the head of Sheba… and threw it to Joab. So, he sounded the trumpet, and his men dispersed from the city, each returning to his home…

- David gave the Gibeonites seven of Saul's descendants because of what Saul had done to them. Even though the Joshua made a covenant with the Gibeonites (see Joshua 9:15-21), *Saul in his zeal for Israel and Judah had tried to annihilate them.* (21:2)
- David attempted to lead Israel against the Philistines, but age was beginning to take its toll on him (21:15-22). *Then David's men swore to him, saying, "Never again will you go out with us to battle, so that the lamp of Israel will not be extinguished."*
- David's Mighty Men (23:8-39).
- David decided to take a census out of pride and arrogance. He realized his folly and repented (24).

Next week: 1st & 2nd Kings.

Lesson 10

1ST KINGS

- This is the second in the series of three double books. Each pair was originally one book.
- 1st Kings records the division of the kingdom of Saul, David, and Solomon into two kingdoms: Israel (the Northern Kingdom) and Judah (the Southern Kingdom).
    - Israel (the Northern Kingdom)
        - Comprised of ten tribes:
            - Asher
            - Dan
            - Ephraim
            - Gad
            - Issachar
            - Manasseh
            - Naphtali
            - Reuben
            - Simeon
            - Zebulun
        - Samaria was the capital.
    - Judah (the Southern Kingdom)
        - Comprised of two tribes:
            - Judah
            - Benjamin
        - Jerusalem was the capital.
- 2nd Kings records the collapse and captivity of both Israel and Judah.

OUTLINE

- King Solomon (chapters 1-11).
    - As King David aged, his health failed, and he was no longer able to keep warm. His attendants brought in a young woman named, *Abishag* to keep him warm and serve as his nurse, *but the king had no sexual relations with her* (1:4).
    - Even though David had already named Solomon as his successor (1 Chronicles 28:5), *Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith, put himself forward and said, "I will be king"* (1:5).
        - Adonijah was David's fourth son (2 Samuel 3:4).
        - He gathered *chariots and horses… with fifty men to run ahead of him.*
        - Apparently, David knew what Adonijah was up to, but did not rebuke him.
        - Adonijah gained the support of Joab (David's Commander in Chief) and Abiathar (David's priest and advisor).
        - *Adonijah then sacrificed sheep, cattle, and fattened calves… He invited all his brothers, the king's sons, and all the royal officials of Judah, but he did not invite Nathan the*

prophet or Benaiah or the special guard or his brother Solomon (1:9-10).
    - The prophet Nathan went to Bathsheba and advised her to go to David, which she did.
    - David instructed *Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet,* [and] *Benaiah* to anoint Solomon king, which they did. The support for Adonijah faded and King Solomon spared his life.
- From his deathbed David charged Solomon, *"…be strong, act like a man, and observe what the LORD your God requires: Walk in obedience to him, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and regulations, as written in the Law of Moses...* [deal with] *Joab… according to your wisdom, but do not let his gray head go down to the grave in peace... show kindness to the sons of Barzillai… and let them be among those who eat at your table. They stood by me when I fled from your brother Absalom... remember, you have with you Shimei… the Benjamite… who called down bitter curses on me… I swore to him by the LORD: 'I will not put you to death by the sword.' But now, do not consider him innocent. You are a man of wisdom; you will know what to do to him. Bring his gray head down to the grave in blood."* (2:1-9)
- Shortly after David died, Adonijah sent Abiatha the priest to ask for permission to take Abishag as his wife. Solomon was so offended he had Adonijah executed and banished Abiathar. Then he had Joab executed. Three years later he had Shimei executed, as well.
- Solomon asked God for wisdom. *At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you." Solomon answered, "…LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties... So, give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong..." The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this... "Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for—both wealth and honor—so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. And if you walk in obedience to me and keep my decrees and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life."* (3:5-15)
- An example of Solomon's wisdom – the dispute between two women. *…two prostitutes came to the king and stood before him. One of them said, "Pardon me, my lord. This woman and I live in the same house, and I had a baby while she was there with me.*

The third day after my child was born, this woman also had a baby. We were alone; there was no one in the house but the two of us. During the night this woman's son died because she lay on him. So, she got up in the middle of the night and took my son from my side while I your servant was asleep. She put him by her breast and put her dead son by my breast…" The other woman said, "No! The living one is my son; the dead one is yours." … The king said, "This one says, 'My son is alive and your son is dead,' while that one says, 'No! Your son is dead and mine is alive.'" …He then gave an order: "Cut the living child in two and give half to one and half to the other." The woman whose son was alive was deeply moved out of love for her son and said to the king, "Please, my lord, give her the living baby! Don't kill him!" But the other said, "Neither I nor you shall have him. Cut him in two!" Then the king gave his ruling: "Give the living baby to the first woman. Do not kill him; she is his mother." (3:16-27)

- Solomon established his government, delegating certain duties, taking care of his people, and gaining a reputation as the wisest king in the region.
- Solomon secured materials and built the Temple and a palace in Jerusalem (chapters 5-7).
- The Ark was brought to the Temple when it was dedicated, *When the priests withdrew from the Holy Place, the cloud filled the temple of the LORD. And the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled his temple* (8:10-11).
- Solomon led Israel during its zenith, the most peaceful and prosperous time in their history.
- Solomon's downfall.
    - NOTE – the instructions of Moses. *When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you and have taken possession of it and settled in it, and you say, "Let us set a king over us like all the nations around us," be sure to appoint over you a king the LORD your God chooses. He must be from among your fellow Israelites. Do not place a foreigner over you, one who is not an Israelite. The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the LORD has told you, "You are not to go back that way again." He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold. When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the Levitical priests. It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees and not consider himself better than*

his fellow Israelites and turn from the law to the right or to the left. Then he and his descendants will reign a long time over his kingdom in Israel. (Deuteronomy 17:14–20)

- *Solomon made an alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt and married his daughter* (3:1).
- *Solomon accumulated chariots and horses; he had fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses, which he kept in the chariot cities and also with him in Jerusalem.* (10:26).
- *The weight of the gold that Solomon received yearly was 666 talents, not including the revenues from merchants and traders and from all the Arabian kings and the governors of the territories. King Solomon made two hundred large shields of hammered gold… He also made three hundred small shields of hammered gold… Then the king made a great throne covered with ivory and overlaid with fine gold… All King Solomon's goblets were gold, and all the household articles in the Palace… were pure gold. Nothing was made of silver because silver was considered of little value in Solomon's days.* (10:14-21)
- *King Solomon… loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter… They were from nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." ...He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines… As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods… Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD… So, the LORD said to Solomon, "Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees… I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates. Nevertheless, for the sake of David, your father, I will not do it during your lifetime. I will tear it out of the hand of your son. Yet I will not tear the whole kingdom from him but will give him one tribe for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen."* (11:1-13)
    - As a result of his sin, Solomon had to deal with rebellions by *Hadad the Edomite* and *Rezon,* king of *Aram.*
    - *Jeroboam …and Ephraimite…* also rebelled. *Jeroboam was going out of Jerusalem, and Ahijah the prophet of Shiloh met him on the way, wearing a new cloak. The two of them were alone out in the country, and Ahijah took*

hold of the new cloak he was wearing and tore it into twelve pieces. Then he said to Jeroboam, "Take ten pieces for yourself, for this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'See, I am going to tear the kingdom out of Solomon's hand and give you ten tribes. But for the sake of my servant David and the city of Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, he will have one tribe." (11:29-32)

- *Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, but Jeroboam fled to Egypt, to Shishak the king, and stayed there until Solomon's death.* (11:40)

- *Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years. Then he rested with his ancestors and was buried in the city of David, his father. And Rehoboam his son succeeded him as king.* (11:42-43)

- The Divided Kingdom (chapters 12-22).
  - <u>Rehoboam (Judah)</u>, Solomon's son, *succeeded him as king* (11:43).
    - When a contingent, led by Jeroboam who *returned from Egypt* asked Rehoboam to reduce their heavy tax burden, his elders advised him to do so, *"If today you will be a servant to these people and serve them and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your servants."* (12:1-9)
    - However, Rehoboam rejected the advice of his elders in favor of *the young men who had grown up with him… "…tell them, '…My father laid on you a heavy yoke; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions.'"* (12:10-11)
    - *When… the Israelites heard that Jeroboam had returned, they… made him king over all Israel. Only the tribe of Judah remained loyal to the house of David. When Rehoboam arrived in Jerusalem, he mustered all Judah and the tribe of Benjamin… to go to war against Israel… But this word of God came to Shemaiah the man of God: "…Do not go up to fight against your brothers, the Israelites. Go home, every one of you, for this is my doing.'" So, they obeyed the word of the LORD and went home again, as the LORD had ordered.* (12:20-24)
  - <u>Jeroboam (Israel)</u> did not want his people going to the Temple in Jerusalem to offer sacrifices.
    - His solution was to build *two golden calves.* He placed one *in Bethel and the other in Dan* and instructed the people to make sacrifices there. He established a priesthood and a festival.
    - A prophet *came from Judah to Bethel… "…This is what the LORD says: 'A son named Josiah will be born to the house*

of David. On you he will sacrifice the priests of the high places who make offerings here, and human bones will be burned on you.' ...This is the sign the LORD has declared: The altar will be split apart and the ashes on it will be poured out." (13:2-3)

- *When King Jeroboam heard what the man of God cried out against the altar at Bethel, he stretched out his hand from the altar and said, "Seize him!" But the hand he stretched out toward the man shriveled up, so that he could not pull it back. Also, the altar was split apart and its ashes poured out according to the sign given by the man of God by the word of the LORD.* (13:4-5)
- Because of his sin, God told Jeroboam, *"I raised you up from among the people and appointed you ruler over my people Israel. I tore the kingdom away from the house of David and gave it to you… You have done more evil than all who lived before you. You have made for yourself… idols… you have… turned your back on me… I am going to bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam. I will cut off… every last male in Israel… I will burn up the house of Jeroboam as one burns dung… Dogs will eat those belonging to Jeroboam… The LORD will raise up for himself a king over Israel who will cut off the family of Jeroboam... And he will give Israel up because of the sins Jeroboam has committed and has caused Israel to commit."* (14:7-16)
- Meanwhile, Rehoboam (Judah) was no better than Jeroboam (Israel).
    - *Judah did evil in the eyes of the LORD... They also set up for themselves high places, sacred stones and Asherah poles… There were even male shrine prostitutes in the land; the people engaged in all the detestable practices of the nations the LORD had driven out…* (14:22-24)
    - *Shishak king of Egypt attacked Jerusalem. He carried off the treasures of the temple of the LORD and the treasures of the royal palace...* (14:25-26)
    - *There was continual warfare between Rehoboam and Jeroboam.* (14:30)

- <u>Abijah (Judah)</u> succeeded his father, Rehoboam (15:1-8).
    - He reigned for just three years.
    - *He committed all the sins his father had done before him…*
    - *There was war between Abijah and Jeroboam throughout Abijah's lifetime.*
- <u>Asa (Judah)</u> succeeded his father, Abijah (15:9-24).
    - He reigned 41 years.
    - *Asa did what was right in the eyes of the LORD… He expelled the male shrine prostitutes… and got rid of all the*

idols… Asa's heart was fully committed to the LORD all his life...
    - *He brought into the temple of the LORD the silver and gold and the articles that he and his father had dedicated.*
- Nadab (Israel), succeeded his father, Jeroboam (15:25-32).
    - He reigned for two years.
    - *He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, following the ways of his father and committing the same sin his father had caused Israel to commit...*
    - *Baasha son of Ahijah from the tribe of Issachar plotted against him, and he struck him down at Gibbethon…*
- Baasha (Israel) usurped the throne by killing Nadab (15:33-16:7)
    - He reigned 24 years.
    - *He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, following the ways of Jeroboam and committing the same sin Jeroboam had caused Israel to commit.*
    - *As soon as he began to reign, he killed Jeroboam's whole family... according to the word of the LORD…*
- Elah (Israel) succeeded his father, Baasha (16:8-14).
    - He reigned for two years.
    - *Zimri, one of his officials… plotted against him… Zimri came in, struck him down and killed him… Then he succeeded him as king.*
- Zimri (Israel) usurped the throne by killing Elah ((16:15-20).
    - He reigned only seven days.
    - *When the Israelites in the camp heard that Zimri had plotted against the king and murdered him, they proclaimed Omri, the commander of the army, king over Israel…* [they] *laid siege to Tirzah. When Zimri saw that the city was taken, he went into the citadel of the royal palace and set the palace on fire around him...*
- Omri (Israel) was made king through a military coup.
    - He reigned for 12 years.
    - *Then the people of Israel were split into two factions; half supported Tibni son of Ginath for king, and the other half supported Omri. But Omri's followers proved stronger than those of Tibni son of Ginath. So Tibni died and Omri became king.*
    - *He bought the hill of Samaria from Shemer for two talents of silver and built a city on the hill, calling it Samaria…*
    - *But Omri did evil in the eyes of the LORD and sinned more than all those before him.*
- Ahab (Israel) succeed his father, Omri (16:29-22:40).
    - He reigned from Samariah for 22 years.
    - *Ahab… did more evil in the eyes of the LORD than any of those before him. He not only considered it trivial to commit the sins of Jeroboam… he also married Jezebel… and*

began to serve Baal and worship him. He set up an altar for Baal in the temple… he built in Samaria. Ahab also made an Asherah pole and did more to arouse the anger of the LORD… than did all the kings of Israel before him. (16:30-31)

- The Prophet Elijah (17:1-19:18).
    - Elijah told Ahab, *"As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word."* (17:1)
    - To protect him from Ahab, God told Elijah to hide in *the Kerith Ravine… The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook.* (17:2-6)
    - Then God sent him to the home of a widow who would feed him.
        - *…When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her… "Would you bring me a little water… and bring me, please, a piece of bread." …she replied, "I don't have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little olive oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die." Elijah said… "Don't be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small loaf of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. For this is what the LORD… says: 'The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the LORD sends rain on the land.'" She went away and did as Elijah had told her... there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family...* (17:10-16)
        - *Sometime later the son of the woman… became ill… and finally stopped breathing... [Elijah] carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and… cried out to the LORD… The LORD heard Elijah's cry, and the boy's life returned to him…* (17:17-23)
    - Elijah was not the only prophet in Israel. *While Jezebel was killing off the LORD's prophets, Obadiah had taken a hundred prophets and hidden them in two caves, fifty in each, and had supplied them with food and water.*

- God sent Elijah to King Ahab.
    - *…Ahab went to meet Elijah. When he saw Elijah, he said… "Is that you, you troubler of Israel?" "I have not made trouble for Israel," Elijah replied. "But you and your father's family have. You have abandoned the LORD's commands and have followed the Baals. Now summon the people from all over Israel to meet me on Mount Carmel. And bring the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table."* (18:16-19)
    - *Then Elijah said to them, "…Get two bulls for us. Let Baal's prophets choose one for themselves and let them cut it into pieces and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and put it on the wood but not set fire to it. Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD. The god who answers by fire—he is God."* (18:22-24)
    - *So, they took the bull given them and prepared it… they called on… Baal from morning till noon... But there was no response… they danced around the altar they had made. At noon Elijah began to taunt them. "Shout louder!" he said… "Perhaps he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling. Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened." …they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears… until their blood flowed. Midday passed, and they continued their frantic prophesying until the time for the evening sacrifice. But there was no response…* (18:26-29)
    - *Then Elijah… repaired the altar of the LORD, which had been torn down. [He] took twelve stones, one for each of the tribes descended from Jacob… With the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD, and he dug a trench around it large enough to hold two seahs* (24 pounds) *of seed. He arranged the wood, cut the bull into pieces, and laid it on the wood. Then he said… "Fill four large jars with water and pour it on the offering and on the wood." "Do it again," he said, and they did it again. "Do it a third time," he ordered, and they did it the third time. The water ran down around*

the altar and even filled the trench... Elijah stepped forward and prayed: "LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command..." Then the fire of the LORD… burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones, and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench. When all the people saw this, they… cried, "The LORD—he is God!"

- *Then Elijah commanded them, "Seize the prophets of Baal..." Elijah had them brought down to the Kishon Valley and slaughtered there. And Elijah said to Ahab, "Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain." ...Meanwhile, the sky grew black with clouds, the wind rose, a heavy rain started falling and Ahab rode off to Jezreel. The power of the LORD came on Elijah and, tucking his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel.* (18:30-46)
- *...Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, "May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of [the prophets of Baal]." Elijah was afraid and ran for his life... He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed… "I have had enough, LORD… Take my life…" Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep... an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water... Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. There he went into a cave and spent the night. And the word of the LORD came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too." The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD…" Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered*

the rocks… but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too." The LORD said to him, "Go back the way you came… When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. Also, anoint Jehu… king over Israel… and anoint Elisha… to succeed you as prophet..." (19:1-18)

- Elijah found Elisha. *Elisha… took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. He burned the plowing equipment to cook the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his servant.* (19:21)
    - A man named Naboth owned a vineyard near the palace and Ahab wanted it. When he would not sell it, Jezebel had him brought up on false charges and stoned. Ahab took the vineyard.
    - God sent Elijah to confront Ahab, *"[the Lord says] I am going to bring disaster on you. I will wipe out your descendants… I will make your house like that of Jeroboam… because you have aroused my anger and have caused Israel to sin… concerning Jezebel… Dogs will devour Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.'* (21:20-23)
    - Three years later, in spite of being warned not to, Ahab and Jehoshaphat (Judah) attacked Ramoth Gilead. Ahab was killed in battle. *So the king died and was brought to Samaria, and they buried him there. They washed the chariot at a pool in Samaria (where the prostitutes bathed), and the dogs licked up his blood, as the word of the LORD had declared.* (22:37-38)

- <u>Jehoshaphat (Judah)</u> succeeded his father, Asa (22:41-50).
    - He reigned for 25 years.

    - *In everything he followed the ways of his father Asa and did not stray from them; he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD.*
    - *Jehoshaphat was also at peace with the king of Israel.*
- Ahaziah (Israel) succeeded his father, Ahab (22:51-53).
    - He reigned for two years.
    - *He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, because he followed the ways of his father and mother and of Jeroboam son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin. He served and worshiped Baal and aroused the anger of the LORD, the God of Israel, just as his father had done.*



2ND KINGS

- This book continues the sad downward spiral of Israel (Northern Kingdom) and Judah (Southern Kingdom)
- In chapter 17 Israel is conquered by the Assyrians and carried into captivity from which they never returned.
- In chapter 25 Judah is conquered by the Babylonians. The Temple was destroyed and the people carried into captivity.

OUTLINE

- The days of Elisha (Chapters 1-13)
    - Ahaziah (Israel) was still king.
        - But he *"had fallen through the lattice of his upper room in Samaria and injured himself... he sent messengers* to Baal-Zebub*, ...to see if I will recover from this injury.* However, Elisha sent word to him, *"You will not leave the bed you are lying on. You will certainly die!"*
        - *So, he died, according to the word of the LORD... Because Ahaziah had no son, [his brother] Joram succeeded him as king…* (1:17)
    - Elijah *went up to heaven in a whirlwind* (2:11) and Elisha received his cloak, symbolic of his authority and prophetic power.
    - Joram (Israel) succeeded his brother Ahaziah (3).
        - He reigned for 12 years.
        - *He did evil in the eyes of the LORD…*
        - The king of Moab rebelled against Israel and Joram formed an alliance with Jehoshaphat (Judah). Elisha assured them of victory, which God gave them.
    - Elisha was approached by the widow of *a man from the company of prophets… "my husband is dead, and you know that he revered the LORD. But now his creditor is coming to take my two boys as his slaves."* God miraculously provided an abundance of oil which they sold to pay the debt and live on. (4:1-7)
    - Elisha raised the Shunammite woman's son from the dead (4:8-37)
    - When Elisha healed Naaman of leprosy he refused payment of any kind, but Elisha's servant Gehazi went back and asked for *a talent of silver and two sets of clothing.* When Elisha found out, Gehazi and his family were stricken with the disease. (5)
    - The floating axhead (6:1-7)
    - Elisha advised Joram (Israel) in the war against Aram (8:8-23)
        - God protected his prophet and blinded the Aramean army.
        - Sometime later the Arameans attacked Samaria and the siege lasted so long people resorted to cannibalism.
        - The Lord *caused the Arameans to hear the sound of chariots, and horses, and a great army* so that they fled *and*

abandoned their tents, their animals, *and* all their supplies.

- Jehoram (Judah) succeeded his father, Jehoshaphat (8:16-23).
  - He reigned for eight years.
  - *He did evil in the eyes of the LORD. Nevertheless, for the sake of his servant David, the LORD was not willing to destroy Judah.*
- Ahaziah (Judah) succeeded his father, Jehoram (8:25-29).
  - He reigned for one year.
  - *…he did evil in the eyes of the Lord as the house of Ahab had done…*
- Jehu (Israel) chosen by God to replace Joram (9-10).
  - Elijah was commissioned by God to anoint Jehu king over Israel (1 Kings 19:16), but the assignment fell to his successor Elisha who delegated it to one of the young prophets. *"…take this flask of olive oil with you and go to Ramoth Gilead… look for Jehu… get him away from his companions and take him into an inner room. Then take the flask and pour the oil on his head and declare, 'This is what the LORD says: I anoint you king over Israel.' Then open the door and run!"*
  - *Then the prophet poured the oil on Jehu's head and declared, "I anoint you king over the LORD's people Israel. You are to destroy the house of Ahab… and I will avenge the blood of my servants… shed by Jezebel... dogs will devour her on the plot of ground at Jezreel, and no one will bury her."*
  - *When Jehu went out to his fellow officers… Jehu said, "Here is what he told me: 'I anoint you king over Israel.'" They quickly took their cloaks and spread them under him on the bare steps. Then they blew the trumpet and shouted, "Jehu is king!"*
  - Jehu carried out everything the prophet told him.
    - *Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah rode out, each in his own chariot, to meet Jehu. They met him at the plot of ground that had belonged to Naboth… Jehu drew his bow and shot Joram between the shoulders... and he slumped down in his chariot. Jehu said, "Pick him up and throw him on the field that belonged to Naboth…*
      - *When Ahaziah king of Judah saw what had happened, he fled… They wounded him in his chariot… but he escaped to Megiddo and died there.*
      - *Then Jehu went to Jezreel. When Jezebel heard about it, she put on eye makeup, arranged her hair, and looked out of a window... Two or three eunuchs… threw her down, and some of her blood spattered the wall and the horses as they trampled her underfoot...*

when they went out to bury her, they found nothing except her skull, her feet and her hands...

- *Jehu wrote letters and sent them to Samaria: to the officials of Jezreel, to the elders and to the guardians of Ahab's children… "You have your master's sons with you and you have chariots and horses, a fortified city and weapons. Now as soon as this letter reaches you, choose the best and most worthy of your master's sons and set him on his father's throne. Then fight for your master's house." But they were terrified… [they] took the princes and slaughtered all seventy of them. They put their heads in baskets and sent them to Jehu…*
- *Jehu killed everyone in Jezreel who remained of the house of Ahab, as well as all his chief men, his close friends and his priests… At Beth Eked… he met some relatives of Ahaziah king of Judah… they took them alive and slaughtered them by the well of Beth Eked… He left no survivor.*
- *When Jehu came to Samaria, he killed all who were left there of Ahab's family; he destroyed them, according to the word of the LORD…*
- *Then Jehu brought all the people together and said to them, "Ahab served Baal a little; Jehu will serve him much. Now summon all the prophets of Baal, all his servants and all his priests. See that no one is missing, because I am going to hold a great sacrifice for Baal. Anyone who fails to come will no longer live." …Then he sent word throughout Israel, and all the servants of Baal came; not one stayed away. They crowded into the temple of Baal until it was full… As soon as Jehu had finished making the burnt offering, he ordered the guards and officers: "Go in and kill them; let no one escape." …The guards and officers threw the bodies out and then entered the inner shrine of the temple of Baal. They brought the sacred stone out of the temple of Baal and burned it. They demolished the sacred stone… and tore down the temple of Baal, and people have used it for a latrine to this day...*
- *The LORD said to Jehu, "Because you have done well in accomplishing what is right in my eyes and have done to the house of Ahab all I had in mind to do, your descendants will sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation." Yet Jehu was not careful to keep the law of the LORD… He did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam…*

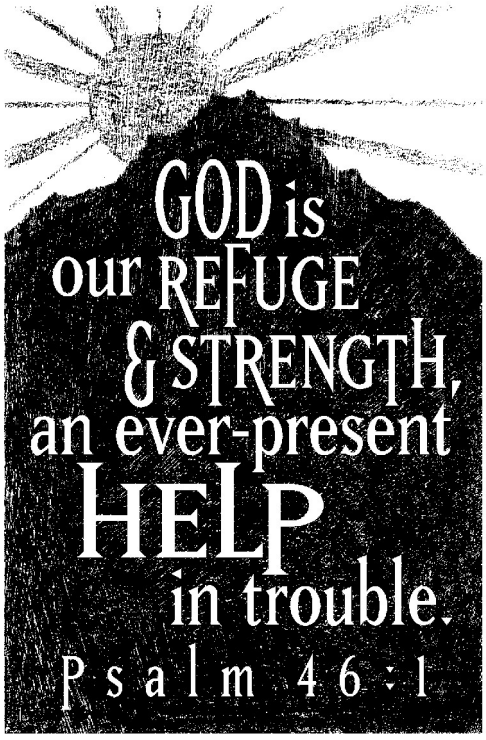
    - Jehu reigned for 28 years.
    - *In those days the LORD began to reduce the size of Israel.* (10:32)
- Athaliah (Judah) usurped the throne after the death of her son, Ahaziah. She was the only queen of either nation.
    - She reigned for six years.
    - *When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she proceeded to destroy the whole royal family. But Jehosheba, the daughter of King Jehoram and sister of Ahaziah, took Joash son of Ahaziah… She put him and his nurse in a bedroom to hide… He remained hidden with his nurse at the temple of the LORD…*
    - Jehoiada the high priest assembled the military commanders and the royal bodyguards secretly in Solomon's temple. They were loyalists who did not support the queen. He showed them Joash.
    - *The commanders… and came to Jehoiada… he gave the commanders the spears and shields that had belonged to King David and that were in the temple of the LORD. The guards… stationed themselves around the king… Jehoiada… put the crown on him… and proclaimed him king. They anointed him, and the people clapped their hands and shouted, "Long live the king!"*
    - *When Athaliah heard the noise… She looked and there was the king… and all the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets. Then Athaliah tore her robes and called out, "Treason!" Jehoiada… ordered the commanders… "Bring her out… and put to the sword anyone who follows her." …they seized her as she reached the place where the horses enter the palace grounds, and there she was put to death.*
- Joash (Judah) replaced Athaliah and succeeded his father Ahaziah (11:17-12:21)
    - He reigned for 40 years.
    - The people destroyed the temple of Baal and smashed the altars.
    - *Joash did what was right in the eyes of the LORD all the years Jehoiada the priest instructed him.*
    - He instituted repairs on the Temple.
    - *His officials conspired against him and assassinated him…*
- Jehoahaz (Israel) succeeded his father, Jehu (13:1-9).
    - He reigned for 17 years.
    - *He did evil in the eyes of the LORD by following the sins of Jeroboam… the LORD's anger burned against Israel, and for a long time he kept them under the power of Hazael king of Aram and Ben-Hadad his son.*
- Jehoash (Israel) succeeded his father Jehoahaz (13:10-25).

        - He reigned for 16 years.
        - *He did evil in the eyes of the LORD…*
        - Elisha died during his reign.
- The fall of Israel (Chapters 14-17)
    - Amaziah (Judah) succeeded his father Joash (14:1-21).
        - He reigned for 29 years.
        - *He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD… In everything he followed the example of his father Joash.*
        - He executed the officials who murdered his father.
        - He was captured in a battle with Jehoash (Israel) who plundered Jerusalem and took hostages back to Samaria.
        - His son, Azariah began to reign when he was captured and Amaziah was executed by some of his officials.
    - Jeroboam II (Israel) succeeded his father Jehoash (14:23-29).
        - He reigned for 41 years.
        - *He did evil in the eyes of the Lord…*
    - Azariah (Judah) succeeded his father, Azariah (15:1-7).
        - He reigned for 52 years.
        - *He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord…*
        - When he contracted leprosy, he had to move out of the palace and his son, Jotham, ruled in his stead.
    - Zechariah (Israel) succeeded his father, Jeroboam II (15:8-12).
        - He reigned for six months.
        - *He did evil in the eyes of the Lord…*
        - He was assassinated by Shallum.
    - Shallum (Israel) assassinated Zechariah and usurped the throne (15:13-16).
        - He reigned for one month.
        - He was assassinated by Menahem.
    - Menahem (Israel) assassinated Shallum and usurped the throne (15:17-22).
        - He reigned for 10 years.
        - *He did evil in the eyes of the Lord…*
    - Pekahiah (Israel) succeeded his father, Menahem (15:23-26).
        - He reigned for two years.
        - He *did evil in the eyes of the Lord…*
        - He was assassinated by Pekah.
    - Pekah (Israel) assassinated Pekahiah and usurped the throne (15:27-31).
        - He reigned for 20 years.
        - *He did evil in the eyes of the Lord…*
        - The Assyrians began conquering portions of Israel during his reign.
        - He was assassinated by Hoshea.
    - Jotham (Judah) succeeded his father, Azariah, aka Uzziah (15:32-38).
        - He reigned for 16 years.

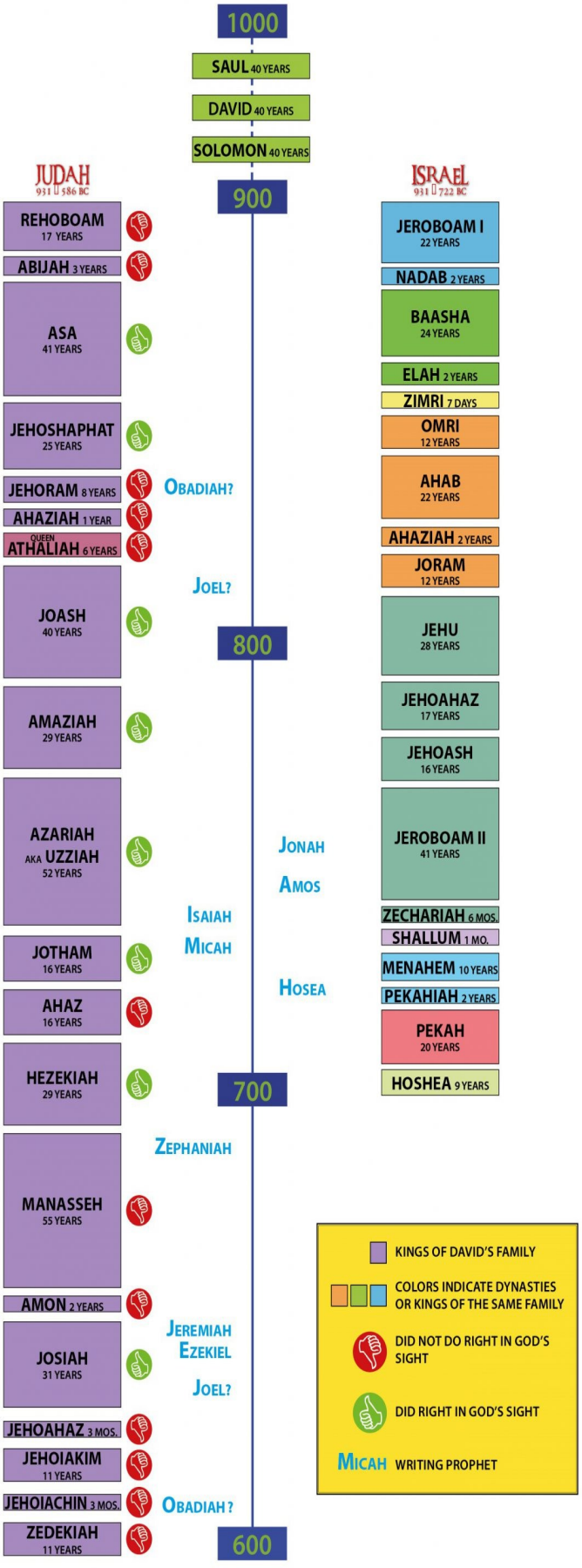
        - *He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord…*
    - Ahaz (Judah) succeeded his father, Jotham (16).
        - He reigned for 16 years.
        - *He did not do what was right in the eyes of the Lord…*
        - He even sacrificed his own son.
        - He formed a foolish alliance with the Assyrians.
    - Hoshea (Israel) assassinated Pekah and usurped the throne (17).
    - He reigned for nine years.
        - *He did evil in the eyes of the Lord…*
        - When the king of Assyria found out he was sending tribute to the Egyptians, Hoshea was taken prisoner and many of the people were carried away into captivity. Samaria was resettled by *people from Babylon, Kuthah, Avva, Hamath and Sepharvaim.*
        - He was the last king of Israel.
- The fall of Judah (Chapters 18-25)
    - Hezekiah (Judah) he succeeded his father Ahaz (18-20).
        - He reigned for 29 years.
        - *He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord… He removed the high places, smashed the sacred stones, and cut down the Asherah poles. He broke into pieces the bronze snake Moses had made, for… the Israelites had been burning incense to it... Hezekiah trusted in the LORD, the God of Israel. There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, either before him or after him.*
        - *In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah's reign, Sennacherib king of Assyria attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them.* Hezekiah attempted to buy him off with all the gold in the Temple, as well as the palace, but the siege continued.
        - God intervened and Sennacherib withdrew to Nineveh.
    - Menasseh (Judah) succeeded his father, Hezekiah (21:1-18).
        - He reigned for 55 years.
        - *He did evil in the eyes of the Lord… He rebuilt the high places…*
        - He worshiped pagan gods in the Temple itself.
    - Amon (Judah) succeeded his father, Menasseh (21:19-26).
        - He reigned for two years.
        - *He did evil in the eyes of the Lord…*
        - He was assassinated by his own officials.
    - Josiah (Judah) succeeded his father, Amon (22:1-23:30).
        - He reigned for 31 years.
        - *He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord…*
        - He instructed the high priest to begin renovation of the Temple. During the renovations, the Book of the Law was found.
        - Josiah led Israel in repentance and restoration of the Cove-

nant.
    - He was killed in a battle with the Egyptians.
- Jehoahaz (Judah) succeeded his father (23:31-35).
    - He reigned for three months.
    - *He did evil in the eyes of the Lord…*
    - Pharaoh took him prisoner and he died in Egypt.
- Jehoiakim (Judah) put in place by Pharaoh (23:36-24:7).
    - He reigned for 11 years.
    - *He did evil in the eyes of the Lord…*
    - During his reign, Nebuchadnezzar invaded, and Judah became a vasal state of Babylon.
- Jehoiachin (Judah) succeeded his father, Jehoiakim (24:8-17).
    - He reigned for three months.
    - *He did evil in the eyes of the Lord…*
    - He surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar.
    - He was taken prisoner and carried off to Babylon.
- Zedekiah (Judah) put in place by Nebuchadnezzar (24:17-25:26).
    - He reigned for 11 years.
    - *He did what was evil in the eyes of the Lord…*
    - He led a revolt against Nebuchadnezzar and Jerusalem was destroyed.
    - He was blinded and carried off to Babylon.
    - He was the last king of Judah.

NEXT WEEK: Read 1 and 2 Chronicles.



Kings of Israel & Judah



Lesson 11

1ST CHRONICLES

- 1st and 2nd Chronicles were one book in the Hebrew Bible.
- Jewish tradition says both books were written by Ezra after he returned to Jerusalem from the Babylonian captivity.
- The books are an overview of certain events and a genealogy from Adam to Nehemiah.
- There is some repetition and some filling of the gaps when read after 1st & 2nd Samuel and 1st & 2nd Kings. In fact, more than half the material in the Chronicles comes from the Samuel and Kings sources.
- The books deal only with Judah and the line of King David.
- Chronicles is closely related to Ezra and Nehemiah, which will come next in this study.

OUTLINE

- The People of the Lord (Chapters 1–9).
    - Patriarchs (1)
      *NOTE: Once the genealogical record moved through Adam — Noah — Abraham — Isaac — Jacob (Israel) it is not a complete record, listing generational highlights along the way to David and the kings of Judah. This is in keeping with the purpose of the record.
        - Adam — Seth — Enosh — Kenan — Mahalalel — Jared — Enoch — Methuselah — Lamech — Noah.
        - Noah's sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth and their descendants (1:5-27). *NOTE the names of nations that appear later in Old Testament accounts.
        - Abraham's sons: Isaac and Ishmael (1:28–33).
        - Isaac's sons: Esau and Israel, aka Jacob (1:34).
        - Israel's sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Joseph, Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad and Asher (2:1).
    - Esau's descendants (1:35–54). NOTE: These are the Edomites.
    - Judah's descendants (2:3-55).
      *NOTE: Judah's sordid story is told in Genesis 38.
        - He had five sons, but the first three (Er, Onan, and Shelah) are not mentioned because the chronicler is only concerned with tracing King David's genealogy.
        - The chosen genealogy continues from Judah — Perez — Hezron — Ram — Nahshon — Salmon — Boaz (Ruth) — Obed — Jesse — David.
    - David's descendants (chap. 3).
        - He had 20 children, including Solomon.
        - Kings of Judah: *Solomon's son was Rehoboam, Abijah his son, Asa his son, Jehoshaphat his son, Jehoram his son, Ahaziah his son, Joash his son, Amaziah his son, Azariah his son, Jotham his son, Ahaz his son, Hezekiah his son,*

Manasseh his son, Amon his son, Josiah his son. The sons of Josiah: Johanan the firstborn, Jehoiakim the second son, Zedekiah the third, Shallum the fourth. The successors of Jehoiakim: Jehoiachin his son, and Zedekiah (3:10-16).

- Solomon's descendants (3:10–24).
- Judah (4:1–5:17).
    - Having traced the Davidic line in detail, the chronicler returned to the line of Judah generally in order to show the preeminence of the Davidic tribe of Judah.
    - *Jabez was more honorable than his brothers. His mother had named him Jabez, saying, "I gave birth to him in pain." Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, "Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain." And God granted his request.* (4:9-10)
    - Simeon (4:24–43) is included here because, *"The inheritance of the Simeonites was taken from the share of Judah, because Judah's portion was more than they needed. So the Simeonites received their inheritance within the territory of Judah"* (Joshua 19:9) and was eventually assimilated into Judah.
    - Reuben (5:1–10) is included here possibly because he was Jacob's (Israel's) oldest son, but was displaced in favor of Judah in the record because he committed adultery with his father's concubine (Genesis 35:22).
    - Gad (5:11–17) is included here possibly because *the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh* had blended together on the west side of the Jordan.
    - The half-tribe of Manasseh (5:23–26) is probably included because, *they were unfaithful to the God of their ancestors and prostituted themselves to the gods of the peoples of the land… So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria… who took the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh into exile… where they are to this day* (5:25-26).
- Levi (chap. 6)
    - The chronicler traced Levi's lineage to maintain the priestly lineage.
    - Levi — Kohath — Amram — Aaron — Eleazar — Phinehas — Abishua — Bukki — Uzzi — Zerahiah — Meraioth — Amariah — Ahitub — Zadok — Ahimaaz — Azariah — Johanan — Azariah (it was he who served as priest in the temple Solomon built in Jerusalem) — Amariah — Ahitub — Zadok — Shallum — Hilkiah — Azariah — Seraiah — Jozadak who *was deported when the Lord sent Judah and Jerusalem into exile by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.*

        - The chronicler may have restated the lineage in order to establish the priesthood after returning from the Babylonian exile.
    - Levitical musicians (6:31–48). The purpose of this entire section (vv. 31–47) is to justify the ministry of David's chief musicians —Heman, Asaph, and Ethan — by showing their pure Levitical lineage.
    - Aaronic priests (6:49–53). Again, the chronicler was very concerned with making sure the priestly line was well-established.
    - The Northern tribes (chap. 7).
      *All of these genealogies are brief and incomplete. *All Israel was listed in the genealogies recorded in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah. They were taken captive to Babylon because of their unfaithfulness* (9:1).
        - Issachar (7:1–5).
        - Benjamin (7:6–12).
        - Naphtali (7:13).
        - Manasseh (7:14–19).
        - Ephraim (7:20–29).
        - Asher (7:30–40).
        - King Saul (8).
    - Citizens of Jerusalem (9:2–34). These are the people who returned to Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity.
      NOTE: They are only from *Judah… Benjamin… Ephraim… Manasseh* (9:3), as well as Levites.
        - Political leaders (9:1–9)
        - Priests (9:10–13)
        - Levites (9:14–16)
        - Gatekeepers and others (9:17–34)
    - Genealogy of King Saul (9:35–44). This section is repetitive, but is probably included because the record of King David's reign begins with the death of Saul.
- The Reign of David (chaps. 10–29)
    - *Now the Philistines fought against Israel; the Israelites fled before them… The Philistines were in hot pursuit of Saul… and they killed his sons Jonathan, Abinadab and Malki-Shua. The fighting grew fierce around Saul… they wounded him... Saul took his own sword and fell on it... So Saul and his three sons died, and all his house died together* (10:1-6). *Saul died because he was unfaithful to the Lord; he did not keep the word of the Lord and even consulted a medium for guidance, and did not inquire of the Lord. So the Lord put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse* (10:13-14).
    - David was anointed king and conquered Jerusalem (11:1-9)
    - David's heroes (chaps. 11–12). The chronicler listed David's mighty men and their exploits.
    - The Ark of the Lord (Chapters 13–16).

- Transporting the ark (chap. 13)
    - David *conferred with each of his officers… Let us bring the ark of our God back to us…*
    - *They moved the ark of God from Abinadab's house… When they came to the threshing floor of Kidon, Uzzah reach out his hand to steady the ark, because the oxen stumbled. The Lord's anger burned against Izzah, and he struck him down because he had put his hand on the ark…*
    - *David was angry because the Lord's wrath had broken out against Uzzah…*
    - *He did not take the ark to be with him in the City of David...*
- David's establishment in Jerusalem (chaps. 14–16)
    - His palace (14:1–2)
      Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, along with cedar logs, stonemasons and carpenters to build a palace for him.
    - His family (14:3–7)
      In Jerusalem David took more wives and became the father of more sons and daughters.
    - His victories over the Philistines (14:8–17)
    - Arrival of the ark (chap. 15-16)
        - *After David had constructed buildings for himself in the City of David, he prepared a place for the ark of God and pitched a tent for it.*
        - *And the Levites carried the ark of God with the poles on their shoulders, as Moses had commanded in accordance with the word of the Lord.*
        - *As the ark of the covenant of the Lord was entering the City of David, Michal daughter of Saul watched from a window. And when she saw King David dancing and celebrating, she despised him in her heart.*
- The Covenant of the Lord (Chapters 17–21).
    - David's desire for a temple (chap. 17)
        - *After David was settled in his palace, he said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am, living in a house of cedar, while the ark of the covenant of the Lord is under a tent." ...But that night the word of God came to Nathan, "Go and tell my servant David, 'You are not the one to build me a house to dwell in… I declare to you that the Lord will build a house for you… I will raise up your offspring to succeed you… and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for me… his throne will be established forev-*

er." Nathan reported to David all the words of this entire revelation.
- *Then King David went in and sat before the Lord...*

- David's foreign affairs (18:1–20:8)
  - God gave David victories over the Philistines, Moabites (18:1–2), Arameans (18:3–11), Edomites (18:12–13), Ammonites (19:1–20:3), and Philistines (20:4–8).
  - David chose to count his troops.
    - This angered the Lord.
    - God told David to choose one of three punishments:
      - *...three years of famine…*
      - *...three months of being swept away before your enemies, with their swords overtaking you…*
      - *...three days of the sword of the Lord — days of plague in the land, with the angel of the Lord ravaging every part of Israel.*

- So the Lord sent a plague on Israel, and seventy thousand men of Israel fell dead. *And God sent an angel to destroy Jerusalem. But as the angel was doing so, <u>the Lord saw it and relented</u> concerning the disaster and said to the angel who was destroying the people, "Enough! Withdraw your hand." The angel of the Lord was then standing at the threshing floor of Araunah… Then <u>David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell facedown</u>. David said to God, "Was it not I who ordered the fighting men to be counted? I, the shepherd, have sinned and done wrong. These are but sheep… Lord my God, let your hand fall on me and my family, but do not let this plague remain on your people." Then the angel of the Lord ordered Gad to tell David to go up and build an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah… So David went up in obedience… "Let me have the site of your threshing floor so I can build an altar to the Lord, that the plague on the people may be stopped. Sell it to me at the full price." Araunah said to David, "Take it! Let my lord the king do whatever pleases him. Look, I will give the oxen for the burnt offerings, the threshing sledges for the wood, and the wheat for the grain offering. I will give all this." But King David replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying the full price. <u>I will not take for the Lord what is yours, or sacrifice a burnt offering that costs me nothing</u>." So David paid Araunah six hundred shekels of gold for the site. David built an altar to the Lord there and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. He called on the Lord, and the Lord answered him with fire from heaven on the altar of burnt offering. Then the Lord spoke to the angel, and he put his sword back into its sheath...*

Then David said, "The house of the Lord God is to be here, and also the altar of burnt offering for Israel."

- The Temple of the Lord (Chapters 22–29).
  - David's plans for a temple (22:2–19).
    - *...he appointed stonecutters to prepare dressed stone… He provided a large amount of iron to make nails for the doors... and for the fittings, and more bronze than could be weighed. He also provided more cedar logs than could be counted…*
    - *David said, "...the house to be built for the Lord should be of great magnificence…"*
    - *David said to Solomon: "My son, I had it in my heart to build a house for the Name of the Lord my God. But this word of the Lord came to me: '...You are not to build a house for my Name, because you have shed much blood… on the earth in my sight. But you will have a son… He is the one who will build a house for my Name...'*
  - David's theocratic organization (chaps. 23–27).
    - *When David was old and full of years, he made his son Solomon king over Israel.*
    - David organized the Levites and put them in charge of the tabernacle treasury and furnishings.
    - David organized the descendants of Aaron into divisions and a succession for service. He also organized musicians and gatekeepers.
  - David organized the military and established government administrators (chap. 27)
  - David's farewell address (28:1–29)
    - David named Solomon his successor and told the people Solomon would build the Temple.
    - *I charge you in the sight of all Israel and of the assembly of the Lord, and in the hearing of our God: Be careful to follow all the commands of the Lord your God, that you may possess this good land and pass it on as an inheritance to your descendants forever.*
    - He gave Solomon the plans for the Temple.
    - David gave his *personal treasures* for the construc-

tion of the Temple and challenged the other leaders to do the same.
- The people accepted Solomon as king and David died. *He ruled over Israel forty years...*

2ND CHRONICLES

- This book is especially close to 1st & 2nd Kings.
- It is focused on Solomon and the rulers of Judah with particular emphasis on the good kings.

OUTLINE

- The Reign of Solomon (chaps. 1–9)
  - Solomon's wisdom and prosperity (chap. 1).
    - *Solomon son of David established himself firmly over his kingdom, for the Lord his God was with him and made him exceedingly great.*
    - Solomon asked God for wisdom and God gave him wealth, fame, peace, and a long life as well.
  - Building of the temple (2:1–5:1).
    - Solomon *conscripted 70,000 men as carriers and 80,000 as stonecutters in the hills and 3,600 as foremen over them.*
    - Solomon imported cedar logs from Lebanon.
    - *Solomon began to build the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to his father David. It was on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite… He began building on the second day of the second month in the fourth year of his reign.*
      - The foundation was 90' x 30'.
      - A *portico* 30' wide and 30' high was at the front of the building.
      - Solomon *overlaid the inside with pure gold. He paneled the main hall with juniper and covered it with fine gold and decorated it with palm tree and chain designs. He adorned the temple with precious stones... He overlaid the ceiling beams, doorframes, walls and doors of the temple with gold, and he carved cherubim on the walls.*
      - The *Most Holy Place* was 30' x 30'. *He overlaid the inside with* 23 tons *of fine gold*. *The gold nails weighed* a pound each. *He also overlaid the upper parts with gold... he made a pair of sculptured cherubim and overlaid them with gold. The total wingspan of the cherubim was* 30' …*They stood on their feet, facing the main hall.*
      - *He made the curtain of blue, purple and crimson yarn and fine linen, with cherubim worked into it.*

- *For the front of the temple he made two pillars, which together were* 53’ *long, each with a capital five cubits high. He made interwoven chains and put them on top of the pillars. He also made a hundred pomegranates and attached them to the chains. He erected the pillars in the front of the temple…*

- The Temple furnishings (4-5).
  - *He made a <u>bronze altar</u>* 30’ *long* x 30’ *wide and* 15’ *high* directly in front of the Temple.
  - *He made the <u>Sea of cast metal</u>,* a round basin, 15’ in diameter and 7’ deep. *Below the rim, figures of bulls encircled it… The Sea stood on twelve bulls… It was* 3” *in thickness… It held* 18,000 gallons.
  - *He then made <u>ten basins for washing</u>… In them the things... used for the burnt offerings were rinsed, but the Sea was... used by the priests for washing.*
  - *He made <u>ten gold lampstands</u>...*
  - *He made <u>ten tables</u>...*
  - *He also made <u>a hundred gold sprinkling bowls</u>.*
  - *He made the courtyard of the priests, and the large court and the doors for the court, and overlaid the doors with bronze.*
  - *Huram also made the pots and shovels and sprinkling bowls.*
- Dedication of the temple (5:2–7:10)
  - *The priests then brought the ark of the Lord’s covenant to its place in the inner sanctuary of the temple, the Most Holy Place, and put it beneath the wings of the cherubim.*
  - *All the Levites who were musicians… stood on the east side of the altar, dressed in fine linen and playing cymbals, harps and lyres. They were accompanied by 120 priests sounding trumpets... to give praise and thanks to the Lord... the singers raised their voices in praise to the Lord and sang: “He is good; his love endures forever.”*
  - Solomon prepared sacrifices, blessed the people and prayed a dedication prayer.
  - *When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. The priests could not enter the temple of the Lord because the glory of the Lord filled it. When all the Israelites saw the fire coming down and the glory of the Lord above the temple, they knelt on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they wor-*

shiped and gave thanks to the Lord, saying, "He is good; his love endures forever."

- Solomon's successes (chaps. 8–9)
  *These were already covered in 1st Kings.

- The Davidic Dynasty (chaps. 10–36)
  *These are only kings of Judah, with emphasis on the good kings, and were already covered in 1st & 2nd Kings.
  - Rehoboam.
  - Abijah (chap. 13).
  - Asa (chaps. 14–16).
  - Jehoshaphat (chaps. 17–20)
  - Jehoram (chap. 21)
  - Ahaziah (22:1–9)
  - Athaliah (22:10–23:21)
  - Joash (chap. 24)
  - Amaziah (chap. 25)
  - Uzziah (chap. 26)
  - Jotham (chap. 27)
  - Ahaz (chap. 28)
  - Hezekiah (chaps. 29–32)
  - Manasseh (33:1–20)
  - Amon (33:21–25)
  - Josiah (chaps. 34–35)
  - Jehoahaz (36:1–4)
  - Jehoiakim (36:5–8)
  - Jehoiachin (36:9–10)
  - Zedekiah (36:11–16)
- The Babylonian Conquest and Exile (36:17–21)
  The Lord… had pity on his people… But they mocked God's messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the Lord was aroused against his people… He brought up against them the king of the Babylonians, who killed their young men with the sword in the sanctuary, and did not spare young men or young women, the elderly or the infirm… He carried to Babylon all the articles from the temple of God… and the treasures of the Lord's temple and the treasures of the king and his officials. They set fire to God's temple and broke down the wall of Jerusalem; they burned all the palaces and destroyed everything of value there. He carried into exile to Babylon the remnant, who escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and his successors until the kingdom of Persia came to power.
- The decree of Cyrus (36:22–23).
  In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah, the Lord moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and also to put it in

writing: "The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Any of his people among you may go up, and may the Lord their God be with them."

NEXT WEEK: Read Ezra and Nehemiah.



Lesson 12

EZRA

- Ezra and Nehemiah deal with the return of the "remnant" which returned to Jerusalem.
- Important dates (approximate):
    - 605-586 BC: King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians conquered Judah and destroyed Jerusalem, including the Temple.
        - Some Jews were left in and around Jerusalem, while some fled to other nations including Egypt.
        - The Babylonians took roughly 50,000 Jewish captives in at least three waves. They were not slaves, but enjoyed a fair amount of freedom so long as they did not leave or rebel.
        - There were changes made to the practice of Jewish religion during the captivity:
            - The synagogue replaced the Temple as a place of worship and remained even after the Temple was rebuilt.
            - Their religious practices were simplified out of necessity.
            - They collected their historical and religious literature.
    - 539-536 BC: King Cyrus and the Persians conquered Babylon and Cyrus issued a decree releasing any Jews who chose to leave.
        - 536 BC: Led by Zerubbabel, the first wave of about 50,000 people returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple.
        - 458 BC: Led by Ezra, a second group of about 7,000 people returned to Jerusalem to reestablish Mosaic religious and civil practices.
        - 444 BC: Nehemiah led an unspecified group of people with a military escort back to Jerusalem to rebuild the city walls.
- The events of Ezra and Nehemiah are fulfillment of the hopeful prophecies of Jeremiah. *Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, 'The LORD is my portion; therefore, I will wait for him.' The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD. It is good for a man to bear the yoke while he is young. Let him sit alone in silence, for the LORD has laid it on him. Let him bury his face in the dust — there may yet be hope. Let him offer his cheek to one who would strike him and let him be filled with disgrace. For no one is cast off by the Lord forever. Though he brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unfailing love. For he does not willingly bring affliction or grief to anyone. God judges as necessary but He is very gracious.* (Lamentations 22-33)

OUTLINE

- The First Wave and Rebuilding under Zerubbabel (chaps. 1–6)
  - The proclamation of Cyrus.
    "The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Any of his people among you may go up to Jerusalem in Judah and build the temple of the LORD, the God of Israel, the God who is in Jerusalem, and may their God be with them. And in any locality where survivors may now be living, the people are to provide them with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with freewill offerings for the temple of God in Jerusalem" (1:2-4).
  - Gathering supplies.
    - *…the family heads of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and Levites… prepared to go up and build the house of the LORD in Jerusalem.*
    - *All their neighbors assisted them with articles of silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with valuable gifts, in addition to all the freewill offerings.*
    - *King Cyrus brought out the articles belonging to the temple of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem…*
  - The list of people who returned.
    *The whole company numbered 42,360, besides their 7,337 male and female slaves; and they also had 200 male and female singers (*2:64-65).
  - The rebuilding of the temple (chaps. 3:1–6:15).
    - The altar and foundation rebuilt (chap. 3).
      In the seventh month, before starting on the Temple, *Joshua* (a priest) *… and Zerubbabel… began to build the altar of the God of Israel to sacrifice burnt offerings on it, in accordance with what is written in the Law of Moses… they built the altar.. and sacrificed burnt offerings on it… Then... they celebrated the Festival of Tabernacles… presented the regular burnt offerings… the New Moon sacrifices and the sacrifices for all the appointed sacred festivals of the LORD, as well as those brought as freewill offerings…* (3:1-6)
      - *In the second month of the second year… Zerubbabel… Joshua… and the rest of the people… began the work... They appointed Levites… to supervise the building… When the builders laid the foundation… the priests… and the Levites… took their places to praise the LORD, as prescribed by David king of Israel... But many of the older priests and Levites and family heads, who had seen the former temple, wept aloud when they saw the foundation of this temple being laid…* (3:8-13)

- The rebuilding opposed (4:1–6:12)
    - When the enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard that the exiles were building a temple for the LORD… they came to Zerubbabel… and said, "Let us help you build because, like you, we seek your God…" But Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the rest of the heads of the families of Israel answered, "You have no part with us in building a temple to our God..."
    - Then the peoples around them set out to discourage the people of Judah…
        - *They bribed officials to work against them…*
        - *At the beginning of the reign of Xerxes, they lodged an accusation…*
        - *…in the days of Artaxerxes, [they] ...wrote a letter against Jerusalem… they went immediately to the Jews in Jerusalem and compelled them by force to stop…*
        - 14 years later Zerubbabel *…set to work to rebuild the house of God… Tattenai, governor of Trans-Euphrates, and Shethar-Bozenai and their associates… asked, "Who authorized you to rebuild this temple and to finish it?"* They wrote a letter to King Darius *... Now if it pleases the king, let a search be made in the royal archives of Babylon to see if King Cyrus did in fact issue a decree to rebuild this house of God in Jerusalem... In the first year of King Cyrus, the king issued a decree… Let the temple be rebuilt as a place to present sacrifices… Now then, Tattenai… and Shethar-Bozenai and you other officials of that province, stay away from there. Do not interfere with the work on this temple of God... Their expenses are to be fully paid out of the royal treasury, from the revenues of Trans-Euphrates…*
    - The temple completed (6:13–15)
      They finished building the temple according to the command of the God of Israel and the decrees of Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes, kings of Persia. The temple was completed on the third day of the month of Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius.
      *21 years after it was started.
- The dedication of the temple and the celebration of the Passover (6:16–22)
    - The new Temple was dedicated according to the *Book of Moses.*
    - The Passover celebration was reinstated.

- The Second Wave and Reforms under Ezra (chaps. 7–10).
  *Much of this section is written in first person.
    - About 57 years after the dedication of the Temple, *Ezra,* a direct descendent of *Aaron… came up from Babylon. He was a teacher well verses in the Law of Moses…*
      - *For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the LORD, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel* (7:10).
      - He recruited Levites for the trip.
      - He came bearing a letter from King Artaxerxes which gave him finances, and resources.
    - Reforms.
      - *A proclamation was then issued throughout Judah and Jerusalem for all the exiles to assemble in Jerusalem. Anyone who failed to appear within three days would forfeit all his property… and would himself be expelled from the assembly of the exiles.*
      - *Within the three days, all the men of Judah and Benjamin had gathered in Jerusalem... Ezra… said to them, "You have been unfaithful; you have married foreign women, adding to Israel's guilt... Separate yourselves from the peoples around you and from your foreign wives."*
      - *The whole assembly responded… "You are right! We must do as you say... Let our officials act for the whole assembly... let everyone… who has married a foreign woman come at a set time…"*
      - *Only Jonathan… and Jahzeiah… supported by Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite, opposed this.*
      - *Ezra the priest selected men who were family heads… On the first day of the tenth month, they sat down to investigate the cases, and by the first day of the first month they finished dealing with all the men who had married foreign women.* (10)
- The book ends abruptly perhaps because Ezra intended to come back to it later, or because he was simply too busy with his obligations as a reformer.

NEHEMIAH

- Most scholars believe this book was written by Nehemiah.
- Nehemiah led a third wave of returning Jews about 13 years after Ezra.
- Nehemiah came to Jerusalem to rebuild the wall around the city.

OUTLINE

- The Rebuilding of the Walls (chaps. 1–6).
  *The book is written is first person.
    - A group of men *from Judah* told Nehemiah, *"Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire"* (1:3).
    - *For some days* Nehemiah *mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven* (1:4). He decided to ask King Artaxerxes for permission to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the wall.
        - In his duties as *cupbearer to the king* (1:11) Nehemiah was able to speak directly to Artaxerxes, *"If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my ancestors are buried so that I can rebuild it"* (2:4-5).
        - Artaxerxes gave Nehemiah letters to secure his safety and the materials needed to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem.
        - When Nehemiah informed the people in Jerusalem of his plans they joined him in the work. However, *Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arab mocked and ridiculed* the project.
        - Nehemiah organized the workers and delegated rebuilding the seven gates of the city, as well as the wall and towers (3). The gates and towers were completed, and the wall *reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart* (4:6).
    - *But when Sanballat* (some historical documents called him, 'governor of Samaria'), *Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the people of Ashdod heard that the repairs to Jerusalem's walls had gone ahead and that the gaps were being closed, they were very angry. They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it* (4:7-8).
        - Nehemiah organized the people to pray and posted guards at night.
        - *Meanwhile, the people in Judah said, "The strength of the laborers is giving out, and there is so much rubble that we cannot rebuild the wall." Also, our enemies said, "Before they know it or see us, we will be right there among them and will kill them and put an end to the work." Then the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times over, "Wherever you turn, they will attack us." Therefore, I sta-*

tioned some of the people behind the lowest points of the wall at the exposed places, posting them by families, with their swords, spears, and bows. After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials, and the rest of the people, "Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your families, your sons and your daughters, your wives, and your homes." When our enemies heard that we were aware of their plot and that God had frustrated it, we all returned to the wall, each to our own work. (4:10-15)

- *From that day on, half of my men did the work, while the other half were equipped with spears, shields, bows, and armor. The officers posted themselves behind all the people of Judah who were building the wall. Those who carried materials did their work with one hand and held a weapon in the other, and each of the builders wore his sword at his side as he worked. But the man who sounded the trumpet stayed with me. Then I said to the nobles, the officials, and the rest of the people, "The work is extensive and spread out, and we are widely separated from each other along the wall. Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, join us there. Our God will fight for us!"* (4:16-20)

- The people in Jerusalem became very concerned about having enough food and became angry with one another, especially those who seemed to have more resources.
    - Nehemiah's became angry with those who were lending money because they were charging their own people interest during a very difficult time.
    - He challenged those who were getting wealthy by taking advantage of the others to *"Give back to them immediately their fields, vineyards, olive groves and houses, and also the interest you are charging them—one percent of the money, grain, new wine and olive oil."* (5:11) They took a sacred vow to do as he said.
    - Nehemiah temporarily eliminated the governor's taxes, worked alongside the people, and fed *a hundred and fifty Jews and officials… as well as, those who came to us from the surrounding nations* at his own table.
- As the project came closer to completion, *Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab and the rest of our enemies* intensified their efforts to stop it and schemed to harm Nehemiah.
    - They made several attempts to lure Nehemiah into an ambush.
    - Sanballat sent Nehemiah a message, *"It is reported among the nations—and Geshem says it is true—that you and the Jews are plotting to revolt, and therefore you are building the wall. Moreover, according to these reports you are*

about to become their king and have even appointed prophets to make this proclamation about you in Jerusalem: 'There is a king in Judah!' Now this report will get back to the king; so, come, let us meet together." (6:6-7) Nehemiah did not go.

- *So, the wall was completed… in fifty-two days.* (6:15)
  - *When all our enemies heard about this, all the surrounding nations were afraid and lost their self-confidence, because they realized that this work had been done with the help of our God.* (6:16)
  - Once the wall was rebuilt, Nehemiah organized *the gatekeepers, the musicians, and the Levites…* as well as, defenses to protect the city. (7:1-3)

- The Restoration of the People (chaps. 7–13)
  - Nehemiah listed those who had returned from Babylon in all three waves, as well as some who had come in from Samaria.
  - The ministry of Ezra. (8-10).
    - The people came together and Ezra read from *the Book of the Law of Moses… aloud from daybreak till noon… and all the people listened attentively…*
    - *Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and teacher of the Law, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to them all, "This day is holy to the LORD your God. Do not mourn or weep." For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law. Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength." The Levites calmed all the people, saying, "Be still, for this is a holy day. Do not grieve." Then all the people went away to eat and drink, to send portions of food and to celebrate with great joy, because they now understood the words that had been made known to them.* (8:9-12)
      - When the people heard the instructions regarding the Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:37-43) they observed it.
      - After the Feast of Tabernacles the people came together in repentance and vowed to keep The Law, as well as, *"We will not neglect the house of our God"* (10:39)
  - The residents of Jerusalem, as well as the priests were listed. (11-12)
  - The wall of Jerusalem was dedicated in a huge ceremony (12:27-47).
  - Final reforms under Nehemiah (13).
    NOTE: Nehemiah served as governor for 12 years while rebuilding the wall, reestablishing The Law, and organizing the work of the priests and Levites in the temple. After this, he returned to Su-

sa (1:1) and the service of King Artaxerxes as he had agreed (2:6). During this time, he probably wrote most of the Book of Nehemiah.

- While Nehemiah was away *Eliashib the priest had been put in charge of the storerooms of the house of our God. He was closely associated with Tobiah, and he had provided him with a large room in the* Temple. (13:4-5)
- When Nehemiah returned, he *...threw all Tobiah's household goods out of the room... gave orders to purify the rooms, and then… put back into them the equipment of the house of God…*
- Additionally, he *learned that the portions assigned to the Levites had not been given to them, and that all the Levites and musicians responsible for the service had gone back to their own fields…* He *rebuked the officials and asked them, "Why is the house of God neglected?"* (13:8-11)
- *All Judah brought the tithes of grain, new wine, and olive oil into the storerooms. I put Shelemiah the priest, Zadok the scribe, and a Levite named Pedaiah in charge of the storerooms and made Hanan son of Zakkur, the son of Mattaniah, their assistant, because they were considered trustworthy. They were made responsible for distributing the supplies to their fellow Levites.* (13:12-13)
- Nehemiah confronted the people for neglecting the Sabbath and even locked the gates and posted guards *until the Sabbath was over…*
- He violently confronted *men of Judah who married women from Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab…* and neglected their responsibility to teach their children *how to speak the language of Judah…* He found one of the high priest's sons who had married a daughter of *Sanballat the Horonite* and *drove him away…*
- He reorganized the *priests and the Levites…*

- **NEXT WEEK: Read the Book of Esther.**

Lesson 13

ESTHER

- While Ezra and Nehemiah deal with the remnant that returned to Jerusalem and Judah, Esther has to do with those who stayed in Babylon/ Persia. The number who stayed was far greater than the number who returned.
- The setting is *Shushan*, which is Susa, the capital of Persia (Esther 1:2; Nehemiah 1:1).
- The overarching theme is God's providential care for his people.

OUTLINE

- Xerxes
    - *… ruled over 127 provinces stretching from India to Cush* (Ethiopia) from 485-465 BC.
    - In some writings he is known as Ahasuerus, the Greek from of his Persian name.
- Queen Vashti is deposed.
    - The name 'Vashti' means *beautiful woman.*
    - *…in the third year of his reign…* Xerxes *gave a banquet for all his nobles and officials... For a full 180 days he displayed the vast wealth of his kingdom and the splendor and glory of his majesty. When these days were over, the king gave a banquet, lasting seven days… By the king's command each guest was allowed to drink with no restrictions… Queen Vashti also gave a banquet for the women in the royal palace…* (1:3-9).
    - *On the seventh day, when King Xerxes was* drunk *…he commanded* his servants *…to bring …Queen Vashti, wearing her royal crown, in order to display her beauty to the people and nobles, for she was lovely to look at... But… Queen Vashti refused to come. Then the king became furious and burned with anger... he spoke with the wise men… "According to law, what must be done to Queen Vashti?" …*They replied, *"Queen Vashti has done wrong, not only against the king but also against all the nobles and the peoples of all the provinces… For the queen's conduct will become known to all the women… Therefore, if it pleases the king, let him issue a royal decree and let it be written in the laws of Persia and Media, which cannot be repealed, that Vashti is never again to enter the presence of King Xerxes. Also let the king give her royal position to someone else who is better than* her. *Then when the king's edict is proclaimed throughout all his vast realm, all the women will respect their husbands, from the least to the greatest." …so the king… sent dispatches to all parts of the kingdom… proclaiming that every man should be ruler over his own household…* (1:10-22)

- Esther becomes queen.
    - *Then the king's personal attendants proposed, "Let a search be made for beautiful young virgins for the king... bring all these beautiful young women into the harem at the citadel of Susa... and let beauty treatments be given to them. Then let the young woman who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti." This advice appealed to the king, and he followed it.* (2:2-4)
    - A little background - Mordecai, Esther's uncle.
        - *...a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin…*
        - *...who had been carried into exile from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, among those taken captive with Jehoiachin king of Judah.*
        - *...had a cousin named Hadassah,* (Esther) *whom he had brought up because she had neither father nor mother...* (2:5-7)
        - He advised Esther not to *reveal her nationality and family background.*
    - The beauty contest. *...many young women were brought to the citadel of Susa… Esther also was taken to the king's palace and entrusted to Hegai, who had charge of the harem. She pleased him and won his favor. ...he provided her with her beauty treatments and special food… assigned to her seven female attendants… and moved her… into the best place in the harem. Esther had not revealed her nationality and family background… Before a young woman's turn came to go in to King Xerxes, she had to complete twelve months of beauty treatments… Esther won the favor of everyone who saw her... the king was attracted to Esther more than to any of the other women, and she won his favor… So, he set a royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.* (2:8-17)
    - Meanwhile, an assassination plot. *During the time Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate, Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's officers who guarded the doorway, became angry and conspired to assassinate King Xerxes. But Mordecai found out about the plot and told Queen Esther, who in turn reported it to the king, giving credit to Mordecai. And when the report was investigated and found to be true, the two officials were impaled on poles.* (2:21-23)
- Haman – the villain.
    - A promotion. *...King Xerxes honored Haman… giving him a seat of honor higher than that of all the other nobles. All the royal officials at the king's gate knelt down and paid honor to Haman, for the king had commanded this concerning him. But Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor.* (3:1-2)
    - *When Haman saw that Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor, he was enraged… having learned who Mordecai's people were… he looked for a way to destroy all Mordecai's peo-*

ple, the Jews, throughout the whole kingdom of Xerxes. (3:5-6)

- The plot to kill all the Jews. *...Haman said to King Xerxes, "There is a certain people dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom who keep themselves separate. Their customs are different from those of all other people, and they do not obey the king's laws; it is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them… let a decree be issued to destroy them… So, the king took his signet ring from his finger and gave it to Haman… "do with the people as you please." ...Dispatches were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces with the order to destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews—young and old, women and children—on a single day… A copy of the text of the edict was to be issued as law in every province and made known to the people of every nationality so they would be ready for that day.* (3:8-14)
- Mordecai seeks Esther's help. *When Mordecai learned of all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the city, wailing loudly and bitterly... In every province to which the edict and order of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing. Many lay in sackcloth and ashes. When Esther's… attendants… told her about Mordecai, she was in great distress... Then Esther summoned Hathak… and ordered him to find out what was troubling Mordecai… Mordecai told him everything that had happened…* and *gave him a copy of the… edict for their annihilation… and he told him to instruct her to go into the king's presence to beg for mercy and plead with him for her people... Then she instructed him to say to Mordecai, "All the king's officials and the people of the royal provinces know that for any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that they be put to death unless the king extends the gold scepter to them and spares their lives..." Mordecai… sent back this answer: "Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?" Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: "Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish."* (4)
- Esther lays a trap for Haman.
    - *On the third day Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the palace… The king was sitting on his royal throne… When he saw Queen Esther… he was pleased with her and held out to her the gold scepter that*

was in his hand... Then the king asked, "…What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be given you." Esther replied, *"…let the king, together with Haman, come today to a banquet I have prepared for him." …So, the king and Haman went to the banquet Esther had prepared. As they were drinking wine, the king again asked Esther, "Now what is your petition?" Esther replied, "If the king regards me with favor… let the king and Haman come tomorrow to the banquet I will prepare for them. Then I will answer the king's question."* (5:1-8)

- *Haman went out that day happy and in high spirits... Calling together his friends and Zeresh, his wife, Haman boasted to them about his vast wealth, his many sons, and all the ways the king had honored him… "And that's not all… I'm the only person Queen Esther invited to accompany the king to the banquet she gave. And she has invited me along with the king tomorrow. But all this gives me no satisfaction as long as I see that Jew Mordecai sitting at the king's gate." His wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, "Have a pole set up, reaching to a height of fifty cubits* (about 75 feet)*, and ask the king in the morning to have Mordecai impaled on it… This suggestion delighted Haman, and he had the pole set up.* (5:9-14)
- *That night the king could not sleep; so, he ordered the book of the chronicles, the record of his reign, to be brought in and read to him. It was found recorded there that Mordecai had exposed Bigthana and Teresh… who had conspired to assassinate King Xerxes. "What honor and recognition has Mordecai received for this?" the king asked. "Nothing has been done for him," his attendants answered... Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the palace to speak to the king about impaling Mordecai on the pole he had set up for him... the king asked him, "What should be done for the man the king delights to honor?" Now Haman thought to himself, "Who is there that the king would rather honor than me?" So, he answered, "…have them bring a royal robe the king has worn and a horse the king has ridden… Let them robe the man the king delights to honor, and lead him on the horse through the city streets… "Go at once," the king commanded Haman. "Get the robe and the horse and do just as you have suggested for Mordecai the Jew…" So, Haman… robed Mordecai, and led him on horseback through the city streets…* Then *Haman rushed home… and told Zeresh his wife and all his friends everything that had happened to him. His advisers and his wife Zeresh said to him… While they were still talking with him, the king's* men *arrived and hurried Haman away to the banquet Esther*

had prepared. (6)

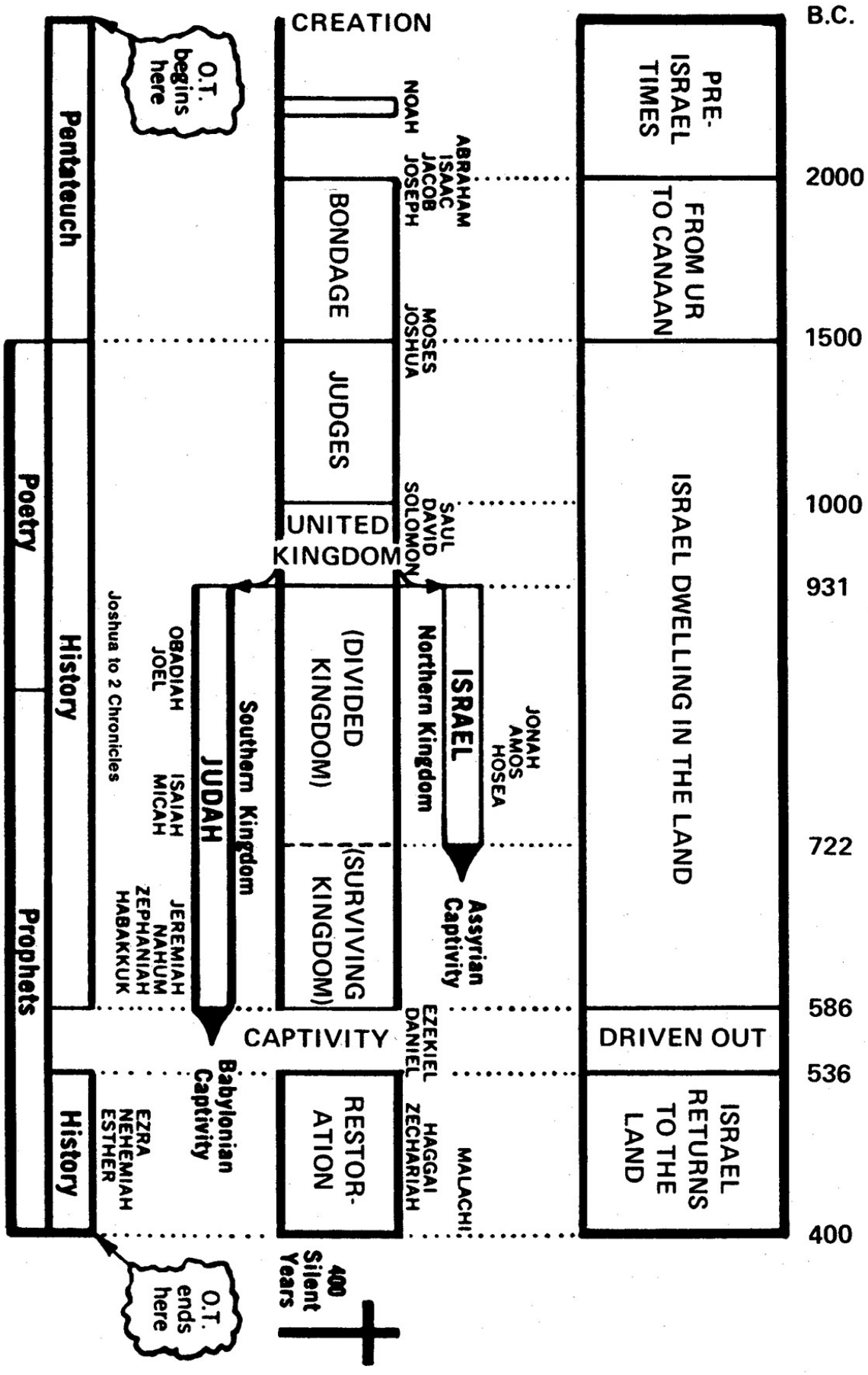
- The other shoe drops. *So, the king and Haman went to Queen Esther's banquet… the king again asked, "Queen Esther, what is your petition?" …Queen Esther answered, "…I and my people have been sold to be destroyed, killed and annihilated…" King Xerxes asked Queen Esther, "Who is he? …who has dared to do such a thing?" Esther said, "…This vile Haman!" …The king got up in a rage, left his wine and went out into the palace garden. But Haman, realizing that the king had already decided his fate, stayed behind to beg Queen Esther for his life. Just as the king returned from the palace garden to the banquet hall, Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was reclining. The king exclaimed, "Will he even molest the queen while she is with me in the house?" As soon as the word left the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face. Then Harbona, one of the* men *attending the king, said, "A pole reaching to a height of fifty cubits* (75 feet) *stands by Haman's house. He had it set up for Mordecai…" The king said, "Impale him on it!" So, they impaled Haman on the pole he had set up for Mordecai.* (7)

- The Jews saved and Mordecai elevated.
  - *That same day King Xerxes gave Queen Esther the estate of Haman… And Mordecai came into the presence of the king, for Esther had told how he was related to her. The king took off his signet ring, which he had reclaimed from Haman, and presented it to Mordecai. And Esther appointed him over Haman's estate.* (8:1-2)
  - *Esther again pleaded with the king… She begged him to put an end to the evil plan of Haman… Then the king extended the gold scepter to Esther… "Because Haman attacked the Jews, I have given his estate to Esther, and they have impaled him on the pole he set up. Now write another decree in the king's name in behalf of the Jews as seems best to you, and seal it with the king's signet ring—for no document written in the king's name and sealed with his ring can be revoked." … Mordecai wrote in the name of King Xerxes, sealed the dispatches with the king's signet ring, and sent them by mounted couriers, who rode fast horses especially bred for the king. The king's edict granted the Jews in every city the right to assemble and protect themselves; to destroy, kill and annihilate the armed men of any nationality or province who might attack them… and to plunder the property of their enemies. …In every province and in every city to which the edict of the king came, there was joy and gladness among the Jews, with feasting and celebrating.*

- Purim (pronounced *poo-REEM*) Established.
    - *On the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, the edict commanded by the king was to be carried out. On this day the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them, but now the tables were turned, and the Jews got the upper hand over those who hated them... No one could stand against them, because the people of all the other nationalities were afraid of them. And all the nobles of the provinces, the satraps, the governors, and the king's administrators helped the Jews, because fear of Mordecai had seized them.* (9:1-3)
    - *The Jews struck down all their enemies with the sword, killing and destroying them… the remainder of the Jews who were in the king's provinces also assembled to protect themselves and get relief from their enemies. They killed seventy-five thousand of them but did not lay their hands on the plunder... This happened on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar, and on the fourteenth, they rested and made it a day of feasting and joy. The Jews in Susa, however, had assembled on the thirteenth and fourteenth, and then on the fifteenth they rested and made it a day of feasting and joy... Mordecai recorded these events, and he sent letters to all the Jews throughout the provinces of King Xerxes, near and far, to have them celebrate annually the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar as the time when the Jews got relief from their enemies, and… when their sorrow was turned into joy… He wrote them to observe the days as days of feasting and joy and giving presents of food to one another and gifts to the poor...*
      *NOTE: Modern Jews still celebrate the Feast of Purim in late winter or early spring with two days consisting of a reading of the book of Esther in the evening of each day, giving money gifts to at least two poor people, sending gifts of two kinds of food to at least one person, a festive Purim feast, which includes specific foods, as well as wine or other intoxicating beverages.
    - *Mordecai the Jew was Jews and rank to King Xerxes, preeminent among the Jews, and held in high esteem by his many fellow Jews, because he worked for the good of his people and spoke up for the welfare of all the Jews.*
- NOTE: Old Testament history begins in Genesis and closes after the accounts of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. The rest of the Old Testament is poetry and prophecy written during the events recorded in the historic books. Roughly 500 years passed between the return to Judah and the beginning of the New Testament, including "The Period of Silence," a period of about 400 years leading up to the birth of Christ.

NEXT WEEK: The Book of Job.

OLD TESTAMENT CHRONOLOGY



Lesson 14

JOB

- Whereas the books we have studied so far (Genesis – Esther) are historical, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs (or Song of Solomon) are all poetic in nature.
- Job is a mixture of prose and poetry, and of monologue and dialogue. While some parts are historical and can be taken literally, others are metaphorical and must be taken figuratively. Chapters 1 and 2 are a historical prologue to the poem that makes up chapters 3 through 42:6. The last eleven verses are a historical epilogue to the poem.
- Many believe this is the oldest book in the Bible.
- We do not know who wrote the Book of Job. Possibilities include Job himself, Elihu (the fourth friend, who spoke toward the end of the book, chaps. 32–37), Moses, Solomon, Hezekiah, Isaiah, or Ezra. Jewish tradition says that Moses wrote the book.
- Job probably lived during the time of Abraham. While some scholars want to make him an allegorical figure Ezekiel mentions him along with Noah and Daniel (Ezekiel 14:12-20) and James wrote, *"As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy"* (James 5:11).

OUTLINE

- Prologue (chapters 1–2).
    - What do we know about Job?
        - He lived in *the land of Uz* – probably in northern Arabia.
        - He was *blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil.*
        - *He had seven sons and three daughters…*
        - He was extremely wealthy - *he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred donkeys, and had a large number of servants. He was the greatest man among all the people of the East.*
        - He cared about the spiritual well-being of his children. *His sons used to hold feasts in their homes on their birthdays, and they would invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would make arrangements for them to be purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, "Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts."*

- Dialogue in heaven.
  - *One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them. The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it."*
    *This recalls Peter's words, *"Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings"* (1 Peter 5:8-9).
  - God boasted about Job! *Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil." "Does Job fear God for nothing?"*
  - *Satan* claimed the only reason Job was faithful was because God *had put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has… blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land...* He challenged God, *...stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.*
  - God allowed Satan to test Job, *...everything he has is in your power, but on the man himself do not lay a finger.*
- Job's first tests. (1:13–2:10)
  - His *oxen…* and *donkeys* were stolen.
  - His *sheep* were destroyed by *the fire of God.*
  - His *camels* were stolen.
  - His children died when *a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them…*
    *NOTE: All of this happened on the same day and yet, *Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship and said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised."*
- Another dialogue in heaven.
  - God bragged about Job even more, *"Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason."*
  - Satan claimed, *"A man will give all he has for his own life. But now stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face."*
  - God allowed Satan to test Job again, *"Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life."*

- Job's second test.
  - *Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head. Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes.*
  - Even Job's wife turned on him, *"Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die!"*
  - But Job remained faithful, *"Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.*
- *When Job's three friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite, heard about all the troubles that had come upon him, they set out from their homes and met together by agreement to go and sympathize with him and comfort him. When they saw him from a distance, they could hardly recognize him; they began to weep aloud, and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust on their heads. Then they sat on the ground with him for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to him because they saw how great his suffering was.* (2:11-13)
- Poetic Dialogue (3:1–42:6)
  - Job wanted to die (3)
    - *"Why did I not perish at birth, and die as I came from the womb?"* (v. 11)
    - *"I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, but only turmoil."* (v. 26)
  - Eliphaz's first speech (chaps. 4–5)
    Eliphaz suggested that Job was unable to take his own medicine. Job had advised others to be patient under trial, but now trouble had come to him, and he was discouraged. Eliphaz claimed there must be some sin Job was being punished for.
  - Job's first reply to Eliphaz (chaps. 6–7)
    - *"Oh, that I might have my request, that God would grant what I hope for, that God would be willing to crush me, to let loose his hand and cut off my life! Then I would still have this consolation— my joy in unrelenting pain— that I had not denied the words of the Holy One."* (6:8-10)
    - *"Anyone who withholds kindness from a friend forsakes the fear of the Almighty. But my brothers are as undependable as intermittent streams, as the streams that overflow when darkened by thawing ice and swollen with melting snow, but that stop flowing in the dry season, and in the heat vanish from their channels."* (6:14-17)
  - Bildad's first speech (chap. 8)
    Bildad accused Job of impugning God's justice. He said Job was full of hot air and called him to repent of his sin. He reasoned if Job was blameless these bad things would not be happening. Bildad even attempted to use history and nature to support his position.

- Job's first reply to Bildad (chaps. 9–10)
  - *"…how can mere mortals prove their innocence before God?"* (v. 9:2)
  - *"You gave me life and showed me kindness, and in your providence watched over my spirit."* (10:12)
- Zophar's first speech (chap. 11)
  Zophar was furious with Job for what he called 'idle words.' He called Job a fool with no potential of becoming wise. He pleaded with Job to repent.
- Job's first reply to Zophar (chaps. 12–14)
  - *"Those who are at ease have contempt for misfortune as the fate of those whose feet are slipping."* (12:5)
  - *"To God belong wisdom and power; counsel and understanding are his. What he tears down cannot be rebuilt; those he imprisons cannot be released."* (12:13-14)
  - *"Mortals, born of woman, are of few days and full of trouble. They spring up like flowers and wither away; like fleeting shadows, they do not endure."* (14:1-2)
- Eliphaz's second speech (chap. 15)
  In his first speech Eliphaz approached Job with a degree of decorum and courtesy, but not so this time. Now he lambasted the bereaved, dejected sufferer with the notion that he was a hardened sinner, disrespectful of his elders and defiant toward God.
- Job's second reply to Eliphaz (chaps. 16–17)
  - *"I have heard many things like these; you are miserable comforters, all of you! Will your long-winded speeches never end? What ails you that you keep on arguing?"* (16:2-3)
  - *"My spirit is broken, my days are cut short, the grave awaits me. Surely mockers surround me; my eyes must dwell on their hostility."* (17:1-2)
- Bildad's second speech (chap. 18)
  Bildad called Job wicked and told him his situation would only get worse unless he repented.
- Job's second reply to Bildad (chap. 19)
  - *"If it is true that I have gone astray, my error remains my concern alone."* (4)
  - *"Have pity on me, my friends, have pity, for the hand of God has struck me. Why do you pursue me as God does? Will you never get enough of my flesh?"* (21-22)
- Zophar's second speech (chap. 20)
  Infuriated and insulted, Zophar blasted Job, seeking to convince him that his wealth had vanished because that is what happens to those who deprive the poor.

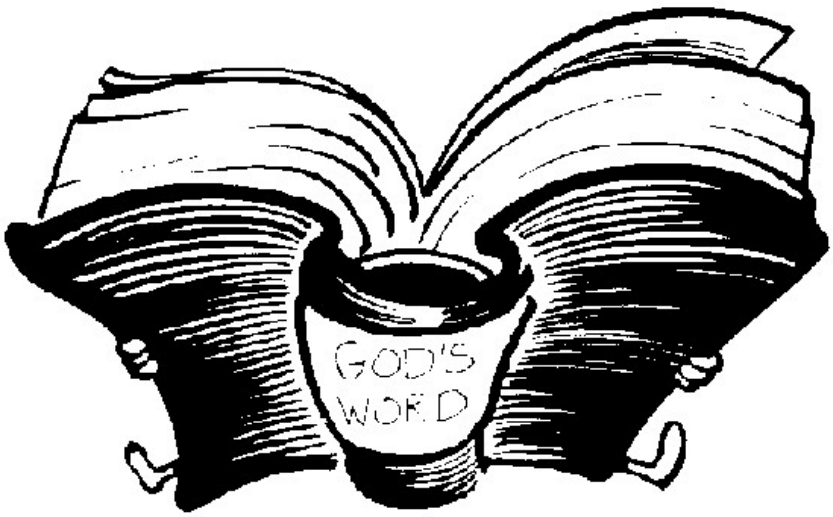
- Job's second reply to Zophar (chap. 21)
  - *"Is my complaint directed to a human being? Why should I not be impatient?"* (21:4)
  - *"Why do the wicked live on, growing old and increasing in power?"* (21:7)
- Eliphaz's third speech (chap. 22)
  Eliphaz again accused Job of sin and urged him to turn back to God. He asserted the wicked always suffer and that Job was a deliberate transgressor.
- Job's third reply to Eliphaz (chaps. 23–24)
  "…if I go to the east, he is not there; if I go to the west, I do not find him. When he is at work in the north, I do not see him; when he turns to the south, I catch no glimpse of him. But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold. My feet have closely followed his steps; I have kept to his way without turning aside. I have not departed from the commands of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread. But he stands alone, and who can oppose him? He does whatever he pleases. He carries out his decree against me, and many such plans he still has in store. That is why I am terrified before him; when I think of all this, I fear him. God has made my heart faint; the Almighty has terrified me. Yet I am not silenced by the darkness, by the thick darkness that covers my face." (23:8-17)
- Bildad's third speech (chap. 25)
  Bildad's final remarks were brief. He told Job it was worthless to seek justice from God because of his iniquity.
- Job's third reply to Bildad (chaps. 26–31)
  - Job seems to have had enough and launched into a lengthy response.
  - *"As surely as God lives, who has denied me justice, the Almighty, who has made my life bitter, as long as I have life within me, the breath of God in my nostrils, my lips will not say anything wicked, and my tongue will not utter lies. I will never admit you are in the right; till I die, I will not deny my integrity. I will maintain my innocence and never let go of it; my conscience will not reproach me as long as I live."* (27:2-6)
  - *"Where then does wisdom come from? Where does understanding dwell? …God understands the way to it and he alone knows where it dwells… And he said to the human race, 'The fear of the Lord—that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding.'"* (28:20-21, 28)
- Elihu's speeches (chaps. 32–37)
  Finally, Job's three 'friends' gave up. Elihu, a young bystander, was angry at both sides of the debate and rose to defend God's justice and sovereignty. Elihu's sensitivity to Job's need contrasts with the harsh words of the three.

- *"I am young in years, and you are old; that is why I was fearful, not daring to tell you what I know. I thought, 'Age should speak; advanced years should teach wisdom.' But it is the spirit in a person, the breath of the Almighty, that gives them understanding. It is not only the old who are wise, not only the aged who understand what is right."* (32:6-9)
- *"Pay attention, Job, and listen to me; be silent, and I will speak. If you have anything to say, answer me; speak up, for I want to vindicate you. But if not, then listen to me; be silent, and I will teach you wisdom."* (33:31-33)
- *"So, listen to me, you men of understanding. Far be it from God to do evil, from the Almighty to do wrong… It is unthinkable that God would do wrong, that the Almighty would pervert justice... If it were his intention and he withdrew his spirit and breath, all humanity would perish together and… return to the dust."* (34:10-15)

- God speaks (38:1–42:6)
  - God's first speech (38:1–40:2)
    - *"Who is this that obscures my plans with words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me. Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone — while the morning stars sang together, and all the angels shouted for joy? "Who shut up the sea behind doors when it burst forth from the womb, when I made the clouds its garment and wrapped it in thick darkness, when I fixed limits for it and set its doors and bars in place, when I said, 'This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt?'"* (38:2-11)
    - *"Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!"* (40:2)
  - Job's first reply to God (40:3–5)
    "I am unworthy—how can I reply to you? I put my hand over my mouth. I spoke once, but I have no answer— twice, but I will say no more."
  - God's second speech (40:6–41:34)
    "Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn me to justify yourself? Do you have an arm like God's, and can your voice thunder like his?" (40:8-9)
  - Job's second reply to God (42:1–6)
    - *"I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted."* (42:2)
    - *"My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore, I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes."* (42:5-6)

- Epilogue (42:7–17)
    - God condemned the actions of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar.
        - He told them to repent, offer sacrifices and have Job pray for them.
        - Job prayed for his friends.
    - God restored Job.
        - *After Job had prayed for his friends, the LORD restored his fortunes and gave him twice as much as he had before. All his brothers and sisters and everyone who had known him before came and ate with him in his house. They comforted and consoled him over all the trouble the LORD had brought on him, and each one gave him a piece of silver and a gold ring.* (42:10-11)
        - *The LORD blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the former part. He had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand donkeys. And he also had seven sons and three daughters.* (42:12-13)
        - *After this, Job lived a hundred and forty years; he saw his children and their children to the fourth generation. And so Job died, an old man and full of years.* (42:16-17)

NEXT WEEK: Read the Book of Psalms, or at least the Messianic Psalms: 2, 8, 16, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 31, 35, 40, 41, 45, 50, 55, 61, 68, 69, 72, 89, 96, 97, 98, 102, 109, 110, 118, 132.



Lesson 15

PSALMS

- With 150 chapters the Book of Psalms is by far the largest book in the Bible.
- The Psalms were written individually from the days of Moses through the days of Ezra and collected gradually with frequent revisions as a hymnal for worship.
    - David probably collected many of the Psalms when he organized the Levites and musicians for worship in the Tabernacle (1 Chronicles 15-16).
    - Other kinds organized and reorganized the Temple musicians and may have revised the Book of Psalms as part of their reforms: Solomon (2 Chronicles 5:11–14; 7:6; 9:11; Ecclesiastes 2:8), Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 20:21–22), Jehoiada (2 Chronicles 23:18), Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 29:25–28, 30; 30:21; 31:2), and Josiah (2 Chronicles 35:15, 25).
    - There must have been a criterion for inclusion in the Book of Psalms as selections by Moses (Exodus 15:1–18; Deuteronomy 32:1–43), Miriam (Exodus 15:21), Deborah (Judges 5), Jonah (Jonah 2), and even David (2 Samuel 1) were not included.
    - In David's time Levites also prepared psalms for temple services (1 Chron. 16:4).
    - By the days of Ezra five books of Psalms were collected into one:
        - Book I (Psalms 1–41).
        - Book II (Psalms 42–72).
        - Book III (Psalms 73–89).
        - Book IV (Psalms 90–106).
        - Book V (Psalms 107–150).
          *Each book concludes with a doxology, and the entire Psalter concludes with Psalm 150, a grand doxology.
- Jesus authenticated the Book of Psalms. *"This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms"* (Luke 24:44).
- Authors according to the superscriptions:
    - David wrote 73 (3–9, 11–32, 34–41, 51–65, 68–70, 86, 101, 103, 108–110, 122, 124, 131, 133, 138–145).
    - Asaph (David's choir leader at Jerusalem) wrote 12 (50, 73–83).
    - The descendants of Korah wrote 10 (42, 44–49, 84–85, 87).
    - Solomon wrote 2 (72, 127).
    - Ethan wrote 1 (89).
    - Heman wrote 1 (88).
    - Moses wrote 1 (90).
    - Fifty of the Psalms are anonymous (1-2, 10, 33, 43, 66-67, 71, 92, 94- 97, 99, 102, 104-107, 111, 113- 121, 123, 125-126, 128-130, 132, 134-137, 146-149).

- Many of the Psalms can be classified as follows:
  - Instructional (1, 5, 7, 15, 50, 73, 94, 101).
  - History in reference to Israel (78, 105, 106, 136).
  - Praise (106, 111, 112, 113, 115, 116, 117, 135, 146–150).
  - Confession (6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143).
  - Supplication (86).
  - Thanksgiving (16, 18).
  - Curses (35, 52, 58, 69, 83, 109, 137, 140).
  - The Word of God (119).
  - Messianic (2, 8, 16, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 31, 35, 40, 41, 45, 50, 55, 61, 68, 69, 72, 89, 96, 97, 98, 102, 109, 110, 118, 132).
- Remember, the entire Book of Psalms is poetry.

The Word of God (Psalm 119)

- *"Blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the LORD"* (v. 1).
- *"I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you"* (v. 11).
- *"Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law"* (v. 18).
- *"I have chosen the way of faithfulness; I have set my heart on your laws"* (v. 30).
- *"Give me understanding, so that I may keep your law and obey it with all my heart"* (v. 34).
- *"I will walk about in freedom, for I have sought out your precepts"* (v. 45).
- *"In the night, LORD, I remember your name, that I may keep your law"* (v. 55).
- *"I have considered my ways and have turned my steps to your statutes"* (v. 59).
- *"You are good, and what you do is good; teach me your decrees"* (v. 68).
- *"Your hands made me and formed me; give me understanding to learn your commands"* (v. 73).
- *"All your commands are trustworthy; help me, for I am being persecuted without cause"* (v. 86).
- *"Your word, LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens"* (v. 89).
- *"Your commands are always with me and make me wiser than my enemies"* (v. 98).
- *"Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path"* (v. 105).
- *"You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your word"* (v. 114).
- *"I am your servant; give me discernment that I may understand your statutes"* (v. 125).
- *"The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple"* (v. 130).

- *"Your righteousness is everlasting, and your law is true"* (v. 142).
- *"Long ago I learned from your statutes that you established them to last forever"* (v. 152).
- *"All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal"* (v. 160).
- *"Great peace have those who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble"* (v. 165).
- *"I have strayed like a lost sheep. Seek your servant, for I have not forgotten your commands"* (v. 176).

Messianic Psalms (Psalm 2, 8, 16, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 31, 35, 40, 41, 45, 50, 55, 61, 68, 69, 72, 89, 96, 97, 98, 102, 109, 110, 118, 132).

- *"Therefore, my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay"* (16:9-10).
- *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish… I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted within me… They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment"* (22:1, 14, 18)?
- *"Into your hands I commit my spirit; deliver me, LORD, my faithful God"* (31:5).
- *"You are the most excellent of men and your lips have been anointed with grace, since God has blessed you forever"* (45:2).
- *"The Mighty One, God, the LORD, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to where it sets. From Zion, perfect in beauty, God shines forth. Our God comes and will not be silent; a fire devours before him, and around him a tempest rages. He summons the heavens above, and the earth, that he may judge his people: 'Gather to me this consecrated people, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice'"* (50:1-5).
- *"You know how I am scorned, disgraced and shamed; all my enemies are before you. Scorn has broken my heart and has left me helpless; I looked for sympathy, but there was none, for comforters, but I found none. They put gall in my food and gave me vinegar for my thirst"* (69:19-21).
- *"For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help. He will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death. He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight"* (72:12-14).
- *"Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it. Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them; let all the trees of the forest sing for joy. Let all creation rejoice before the LORD, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his faithfulness"* (96:11-13).

- *"Sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him. The LORD has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations. He has remembered his love and his faithfulness to Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God"* (98:1-3).
- *"The LORD looked down from his sanctuary on high, from heaven he viewed the earth, to hear the groans of the prisoners and release those condemned to death"* (102:19-20).
- *"The LORD says to my lord: 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.' The Lord is at your right hand; he will crush kings on the day of his wrath. He will judge the nations, heaping up the dead and crushing the rulers of the whole earth. He will drink from a brook along the way, and so he will lift his head high"* (110:1. 5-7).
- *"The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the LORD has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes. The LORD has done it this very day; let us rejoice today and be glad"* (118:22-24).

Praise the LORD.
Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens.
Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness.
Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet,
praise him with the harp and lyre,
praise him with timbrel and dancing,
praise him with the strings and pipe,
praise him with the clash of cymbals,
praise him with resounding cymbals.
Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.
Praise the LORD. (Psalm 150)

NEXT WEEK: Read the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon; or key chapters — Proverbs 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 14, 20, 25, 31; Ecclesiastes 1, 5, 11, 12; Song of Solomon 1, 2.

Lesson 16

PROVERBS

- Whereas The Book of Psalms was a hymnal of worship, Proverbs is a collection of divinely inspired practical life wisdom.
- Proverbs are short statements inspired by God and drawn from life experiences.
- A proverb does not argue — it assumes.
- Solomon is the author of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon (aka Song of Songs).
- Many of the Proverbs are Solomon's and others were collected by him.
- *"God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the people of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. He was wiser than anyone else… And his fame spread to all the surrounding nations. He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five... From all nations people came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom."* (1 Kings 4:29-34)
- There are 917 proverbs in this book.

FORMS

- Parallelism: short repeat or back up statements.
- There are three kinds of parallelism:
    - Synonymous Parallelism: the second clause restates what is given in the first clause. For example, *"Penalties are prepared for mockers, and beatings for the backs of fools"* (19:29).
    - Contrast Parallelism: a truth stated in the first clause is made stronger in the second clause by contrast with an opposite truth. For example, *"The light of the righteous shines brightly, but the lamp of the wicked is snuffed out"* (13:9).
    - Synthetic (or Completive) Parallelism: the second clause develops the thought of the first. For example, *"A king's wrath strikes terror like the roar of a lion; those who anger him forfeit their lives"* (20:2).

OUTLINE

- Wisdom and Folly (Chapters 1–9)
    - *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction* (1:7).
    - *How long will you who are simple love your simple ways? How long will mockers delight in mockery and fools hate knowledge? Repent at my rebuke! Then I will pour out my thoughts to you, I will make known to you my teachings* (1:22-23).
    - *Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.* (3:3-4)

- *Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.* (3:5-6)
- *Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.* (3:7-10)
- *Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.* (3:9-10)
- *The path of the righteous is like the morning sun, shining ever brighter till the full light of day. But the way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble.* (4:18-19)
- *Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it. Keep your mouth free of perversity; keep corrupt talk far from your lips. Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you. Give careful thought to the paths for your feet and be steadfast in all your ways. Do not turn to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil.* (4:23-27)
- *There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a person who stirs up conflict in the community.* (6:16-19)
- *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. For through wisdom your days will be many, and years will be added to your life. If you are wise, your wisdom will reward you; if you are a mocker, you alone will suffer.* (9:10-12)

- Proverbs of Solomon (Chapters 10–22)
  - *Ill-gotten treasures have no lasting value, but righteousness delivers from death.* (10:2)
  - *Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but whoever takes crooked paths will be found out.* (10:9)
  - *Whoever heeds discipline shows the way to life, but whoever ignores correction leads others astray.* (10:17)
  - *When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.* (11:2)
  - *A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.* (11:25)
  - *Fools show their annoyance at once, but the prudent overlook an insult.* (12:16)
  - *Walk with the wise and become wise, for a companion of fools suffers harm.* (13:20)
  - *The wise fear the LORD and shun evil, but a fool is hotheaded and yet feels secure.* (14:16)

- *A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.* (14:30)
- *A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.* (15:1)
- *The eyes of the LORD are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good.* (15:3)
- *Better a little with the fear of the LORD than great wealth with turmoil.* (15:16)
- *Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.* (15:22)
- *All a person's ways seem pure to them, but motives are weighed by the LORD.* (16:2)
- *Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city.* (16:32)
- *Children's children are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of their children.* (17:6)
- *A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.* (17:22)
- *Even fools are thought wise if they keep silent, and discerning if they hold their tongues.* (17:28)
- *To answer before listening— that is folly and shame.* (18:13)
- *He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the LORD.* (18:22)
- *Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward them for what they have done.* (19:17)
- *The purposes of a person's heart are deep waters, but one who has insight draws them out.* (20:5)
- *A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid anyone who talks too much.* (20:19)
- *A person may think their own ways are right, but the LORD weighs the heart.* (21:2)

- Sayings of the Wise (Chapters 22-24)
  - *Do not exploit the poor because they are poor and do not crush the needy in court, for the LORD will take up their case and will exact life for life.* (22:22-23)
  - *Do not make friends with a hot-tempered person, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn their ways and get yourself ensnared.* (22:24-25)
- Proverbs of Solomon compiled by the men of Hezekiah (Chapters 25–29).
  - If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the LORD will reward you. (25:21-22)
  - *Like one who grabs a stray dog by the ears is someone who rushes into a quarrel not their own.* (26:17)
  - *Without wood a fire goes out; without a gossip a quarrel dies down.* (26:20)

    - *Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.* (27:1)
    - *Let someone else praise you, and not your own mouth; an outsider, and not your own lips.* (27:2)
    - *Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.* (27:6)
    - *As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.* (27:17)
    - *As water reflects the face, so one's life reflects the heart.* (27:19)
    - *The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern.* (29:7)
    - Fools give full vent to their rage, but the wise bring calm in the end. (29:11)
- The Words of Agur (Chapter 30).
    - *Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.* (30:5-6)
    - *If you play the fool and exalt yourself, or if you plan evil, clap your hand over your mouth! For as churning cream produces butter, and as twisting the nose produces blood, so stirring up anger produces strife.* (30:32-33)
- The words of a mother. *Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.* (31:8-9)
- The Wife of Noble Character (31:10-31).



Lesson 17

ECCLESIASTES

- Whereas The Book of Psalms was collected as a hymnal of worship, and Proverbs is a collection of divinely inspired practical life wisdom, Ecclesiastes is a philosophical reflection about life outside God's fellowship.
- Solomon is the author. While he calls himself "the Preacher," he could be called the Philosopher as he seeks satisfaction in a variety of things before concluding life without God is, *""Meaningless! Meaningless!" ...Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless"* (1:2).
- The word, "meaningless," ('vanity' in some translations) or a derivative, is used 37 times in the book.

OUTLINE

- The Futility of All Human Endeavor (1:1–11).
    - *"Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the Teacher. "Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless"* (v. 2).
    - *What do people gain from all their labors at which they toil under the sun? Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever. The sun rises and the sun sets, and hurries back to where it rises. The wind blows to the south and turns to the north; round and round it goes, ever returning on its course. All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full... All things are wearisome… The eye never has enough of seeing, nor the ear its fill of hearing. What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun... No one remembers the former generations, and even those yet to come will not be remembered by those who follow them.* (vv. 3-11)
- The Futility of Human Achievement (1:12–18).
    - *I have seen all the things that are done under the sun; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind.* (1:14)
    - Wisdom: *I said to myself, "Look, I have increased in wisdom more than anyone who has ruled over Jerusalem before me; I have experienced much of wisdom and knowledge." Then I applied myself to the understanding of wisdom, and also of madness and folly, but I learned that this, too, is a chasing after the wind.* (1:16-17)
    - Pleasure: *I said to myself, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good." But that also proved to be meaningless.* (2:1)
        - *"Laughter," I said, "is madness...* (2:2)
        - *I tried cheering myself with wine, and embracing folly…* (2:3)
        - *I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. I made reservoirs to water*

groves of flourishing trees. I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired male and female singers, and a harem as well—the delights of a man's heart. I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me... (2:4-9)

- *So, I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me. All of it is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.* (2:17)

- Work: The futility of human labor. (2:17–3:22)
  - *I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me. And who knows whether that person will be wise or foolish?* (2:18-19)
  - *…my heart began to despair over all my toilsome labor under the sun. For a person may labor with wisdom, knowledge, and skill, and then they must leave all they own to another who has not toiled for it.* (2:20-21)
  - *What do people get for all the toil and anxious striving with which they labor under the sun? All their days their work is grief and pain; even at night their minds do not rest. This too is meaningless.* (2:22-23)
  - Conclusions: No matter how hard a person may work, God's providence and power does not change.
    - His timing is perfect and ineffective throughout this life and all eternity. *There is a time…* (3:1-8)
    - *He has made everything beautiful in its time...* (3:11a)
    - *He has also set eternity in the human heart…* (3:11b)
    - *I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. That each of them may eat and drink and find satisfaction in all their toil—this is the gift of God.* (3:12-13)
    - *I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it.* (3:14)
  - Men and women often work with impure motivation. (Chapter 4):
    - *oppression* (vv. 1-3)
    - *envy* (vv. 4-6)
    - *greed*
  - A Proverb: *Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will*

keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. (vv. 9-12)

- Promises to God: The futility of religious practices (5:1–7).
  - *Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong.* (v. 1)
  - *When you make a vow to God, do not delay to fulfill it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow.* (v. 4)

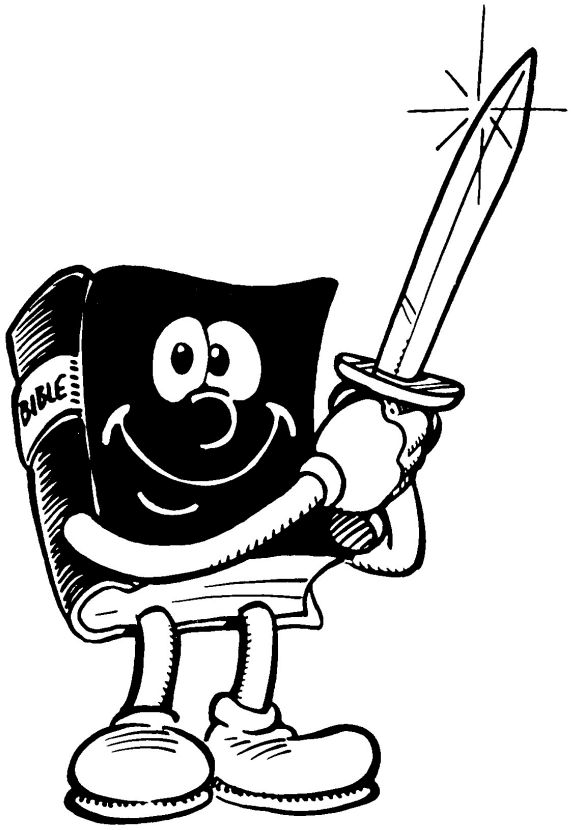
- Wealth: The futility of financial security (5:8-6:12).
  - *Whoever loves money never has enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income. This too is meaningless.* (5:10)
  - *Everyone comes naked from their mother's womb, and as everyone comes, so they depart. They take nothing from their toil that they can carry in their hands.* (5:15)
  - *…that it is appropriate for a person to eat, to drink and to find satisfaction in their toilsome labor under the sun during the few days of life God has given them—for this is their lot. Moreover, when God gives someone wealth and possessions, and the ability to enjoy them, to accept their lot and be happy in their toil—this is a gift of God.* (5:18-19)
  - *God gives some people wealth, possessions, and honor, so that they lack nothing their hearts desire, but God does not grant them the ability to enjoy them, and strangers enjoy them instead. This is meaningless, a grievous evil.* (6:2)
- The futility of human wisdom (7:1-8:1).
  - A list of various proverbs (7:1-8:1).
    - *A good name is better than fine perfume, and the day of death better than the day of birth.* (7:1)
    - *It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting, for death is the destiny of everyone; the living should take this to heart.* (7:2)
    - *Frustration is better than laughter because a sad face is good for the heart.* (7:3)
    - *The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of pleasure.* (7:4)
    - *It is better to heed the rebuke of a wise person than to listen to the song of fools. Like the crackling of thorns under the pot, so is the laughter of fools. This too is meaningless.* (7:5-6))
    - *Extortion turns a wise person into a fool, and a bribe corrupts the heart.* (7:7)
    - *The end of a matter is better than its beginning, and patience is better than pride.* (7:8)
    - *Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools.* (7:9)

        - *Do not say, "Why were the old days better than these?" For it is not wise to ask such questions.* (7:10)
        - *Wisdom, like an inheritance, is a good thing and benefits those who see the sun. Wisdom is a shelter as money is a shelter, but the advantage of knowledge is this: Wisdom preserves those who have it.* (7:11-12)
        - *Consider what God has done: Who can straighten what he has made crooked? When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider this: God has made the one as well as the other. Therefore, no one can discover anything about their future. In this meaningless life of mine I have seen both of these: the righteous perishing in their righteousness, and the wicked living long in their wickedness.* (7:13-15)
        - *Do not be overrighteous, neither be overwise—why destroy yourself? Do not be overwicked, and do not be a fool—why die before your time? It is good to grasp the one and not let go of the other. Whoever fears God will avoid all extremes.* (7:16-18)
        - *Indeed, there is no one on earth who is righteous, no one who does what is right and never sins.* (7:20)
        - *Do not pay attention to every word people say, or you may hear your servant cursing you—for you know in your heart that many times you yourself have cursed others.* (7:21-22)
    - A conclusion. *All this I tested by wisdom, and I said, "I am determined to be wise"— but this was beyond me. Whatever exists is far off and most profound—who can discover it? So, I turned my mind to understand, to investigate and to search out wisdom and the scheme of things and to understand the stupidity of wickedness and the madness of folly... This only have I found: God created mankind upright, but they have gone in search of many schemes…* (7:23-29)
- The futility of attempting to know the ways of God. *When I applied my mind to know wisdom and to observe the labor that is done on earth—people getting no sleep day or night—then I saw all that God has done. No one can comprehend what goes on under the sun. Despite all their efforts to search it out, no one can discover its meaning. Even if the wise claim they know, they cannot really comprehend it.* (8:16-17)
- The futility of life itself (9).
    - *So, I reflected on all this and concluded that the righteous and the wise and what they do are in God's hands, but no one knows whether love or hate awaits them. All share a common destiny—the righteous and the wicked, the good and the bad, the clean and the unclean, those who offer sacrifices and those who do not. As it is with the good, so with the sinful; as it is with those who take oaths, so with those who are afraid to take them.* (vv. 1-2)

    - *This is the evil in everything that happens under the sun: The same destiny overtakes all. The hearts of people, moreover, are full of evil and there is madness in their hearts while they live, and afterward they join the dead.* (v. 3)
    - *Go, eat your food with gladness, and drink your wine with a joyful heart, for God has already approved what you do. Always be clothed in white, and always anoint your head with oil. Enjoy life with your wife, whom you love, all the days of this meaningless life that God has given you under the sun—all your meaningless days. For this is your lot in life and in your toilsome labor under the sun. Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for in the realm of the dead, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom.* (vv. 7-10)
- Additional proverbs (9:19-12:8)
    - *The quiet words of the wise are more to be heeded than the shouts of a ruler of fools.* (9:19)
    - *Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner destroys much good.* (9:20)
    - *As dead flies give perfume a bad smell, so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor.* (10:1)
    - *The heart of the wise inclines to the right, but the heart of the fool to the left. Even as fools walk along the road, they lack sense and show everyone how stupid they are.* (10:2-3)
    - *Words from the mouth of the wise are gracious, but fools are consumed by their own lips. At the beginning their words are folly; at the end they are wicked madness— and fools multiply words.* (10:12-14)
    - *No one knows what is coming— who can tell someone else what will happen after them?* (10:14)
    - *Through laziness, the rafters sag; because of idle hands, the house leaks.* (10:18)
    - *If clouds are full of water, they pour rain on the earth.* (11:3)
    - *Whether a tree falls to the south or to the north, in the place where it falls, there it will lie.* (11:3)
    - *As you do not know the path of the wind, or how the body is formed in a mother's womb, so you cannot understand the work of God, the Maker of all things.* (11:5)
    - *Sow your seed in the morning, and at evening let your hands not be idle, for you do not know which will succeed, whether this or that, or whether both will do equally well.* (11:6)

- *You who are young, be happy while you are young, and let your heart give you joy in the days of your youth. Follow the ways of your heart and whatever your eyes see, but know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment... Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, "I find no pleasure in them…"* (11:9-12:1)

- *"Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the Teacher. "Everything is meaningless!"* (12:8)
- The ultimate conclusion. *Of making many books there is no end, and much study wearies the body. Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.* (12:12-14)



SONG OF SONGS

(aka Song of Solomon)

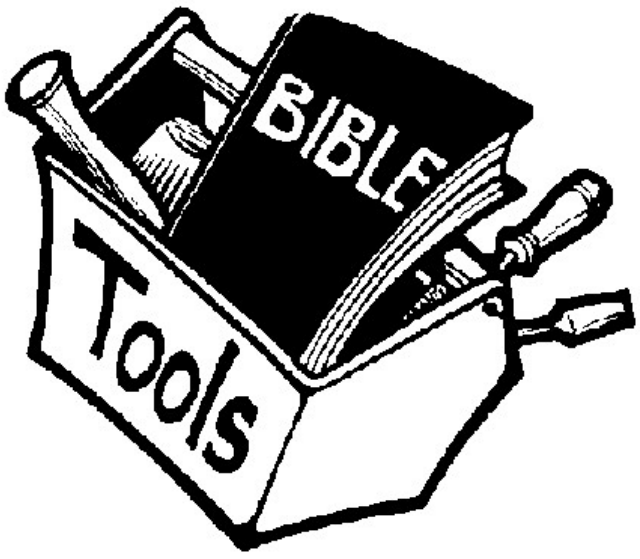
- Song of Songs is a love poem.
- Apparently, Solomon who wrote the book was a romantic.
- The poem is broken parts of a conversation between a man, a woman, and their friends. In the New International Version this is signified with the headings, "He," "She," and "Friends."
- As poetry, Song of Songs can be interpreted in at least two ways:
    - The beauty of romantic and physical love between husband and wife.
    - The metaphor of marriage as it applies to Jesus Christ and his Church, his followers.

OUTLINE

- Courtship (1:2–11).
    - Longing. (She) *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth— for your love is more delightful than wine. Pleasing is the fragrance of your perfumes; your name is like perfume poured out. No wonder the young women love you! Take me away with you—let us hurry! Let the king bring me into his chambers. We rejoice and delight in you; we will praise your love more than wine. How right they are to adore you!* (1:2-4)
    - Insecurity. (She) *Dark am I, yet lovely, daughters of Jerusalem, dark like the tents of Kedar, like the tent curtains of Solomon. Do not stare at me because I am dark, because I am darkened by the sun. My mother's sons were angry with me and made me take care of the vineyards; my own vineyard I had to neglect.* (1:5-6)
    - Mutual Attraction. (He) *I liken you, my darling, to a mare among Pharaoh's chariot horses. Your cheeks are beautiful with earrings, your neck with strings of jewels. We will make you earrings of gold, studded with silver.* (1:8)
- Love Grows (1:12–3:5)
    - Expressions of admiration.
        - (He) *How beautiful you are, my darling! Oh, how beautiful! Your eyes are doves.* (1:15)
        - (She) *How handsome you are, my beloved! Oh, how charming!* (1:16)
        - (He) *Like a lily among thorns is my darling among the young women.* (2:2)
        - (She) *Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest is my beloved among the young men. I delight to sit in his shade, and his fruit is sweet to my taste.* (2:3)
        - (She) *My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Look! There he stands behind our wall, gazing through the windows, peering through the lattice.* (2:9)

        - (He) *My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hiding places on the mountainside, show me your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely.* (2:14)
    - Uncertainty. (She) *...I looked for the one my heart loves; I looked for him but did not find him. I will get up now and go about the city, through its streets and squares; I will search for the one my heart loves. So, I looked for him but did not find him.* (3:1-2)
- The Wedding (3:6–5:1)
    - The wedding procession (She) *Who is this coming up from the wilderness… Look! It is Solomon's carriage, escorted by sixty warriors… King Solomon made for himself the carriage… Its posts he made of silver, its base of gold. Its seat was upholstered with purple…* (3:6-10)
    - The groom sees the bride (He) *How beautiful you are, my darling! Oh, how beautiful! Your eyes behind your veil are doves. Your hair is like a flock of goats… Your teeth are like a flock of sheep… Your lips are like a scarlet ribbon… Your temples behind your veil are like the halves of a pomegranate. Your neck is like the tower of David… Your breasts are like two fawns… You are altogether beautiful, my darling; there is no flaw in you... You have stolen my heart…* (4:1-16)
- Newlyweds (5:2–8:4)
    - Conflict:
        - (She) *I slept but my heart was awake. Listen! My beloved is knocking… My head is drenched with dew, my hair with the dampness of the night. I have taken off my robe—must I put it on again? I have washed my feet—must I soil them again?* (5:2-3)
        - (She) *I arose to open for my beloved… I opened for my beloved, but my beloved had left; he was gone. My heart sank at his departure. I looked for him but did not find him. I called him but he did not answer.* (5:3-6)
        - (She) *The watchmen found me as they made their rounds in the city,,. if you find my beloved, what will you tell him? Tell him I am faint with love.* (5:7-8)
        - (Friends) *Where has your beloved gone, most beautiful of women? Which way did your beloved turn, that we may look for him with you?* (6:1)
        - (He) *I went down to the grove of nut trees to look at the new growth in the valley, to see if the vines had budded or the pomegranates were in bloom. Before I realized it, my desire set me among the royal chariots of my people.* (6:11-12)

- Maybe a little groveling?
    - (He) *How beautiful your sandaled feet… Your graceful legs are like jewels, the work of an artist's hands. Your navel is a rounded goblet that never lacks blended wine. Your waist is a mound of wheat encircled by lilies. Your breasts are like two fawns… Your neck is like an ivory tower. Your eyes are the pools of Heshbon… Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon… Your head crowns you like Mount Carmel. Your hair is like royal tapestry… How beautiful you are and how pleasing…* (7:1-9)
    - (She) *I belong to my beloved, and his desire is for me. Come, my beloved, let us go to the countryside, let us spend the night in the villages. Let us go early to the vineyards to see if the vines have budded, if their blossoms have opened, and if the pomegranates are in bloom— there I will give you my love.* (7:9-13)
- The Marriage Matures (8:1–4)
- The Conclusion. (She) *Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame. Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot sweep it away. If one were to give all the wealth of one's house for love, it would be utterly scorned.* (8:6-7)



Lesson 18

REVIEW

- The Pentateuch.
    - GENESIS is the book of beginnings – the beginning of Creation, as well as the beginning of the patriarchy of Israel (Abraham – Isaac – Jacob and Esau – The 12 Tribes).
    - EXODUS covers the period from the death of Joseph to the enslavement of Israel in Egypt, the plagues on Egypt, Israel's emancipation under Moses. It includes the giving of The Ten Commandments, Israel's sin with the golden calf, and the establishment of the Jewish religion.
    - LEVITICUS – details the Jewish religion, established during their years of wandering in the wilderness, including the sacrificial system, the Law, the priesthood, the festivals, and rules for living in fellowship with God.
    - NUMBERS – contains the details of two census reports and takes the narrative from the generation who left Egypt to those born in the wilderness. It includes the entrance into Canaan.
    - DEUTERONOMY – is essentially Moses' farewell address to the Israelites and the last of the five books (Pentateuch) that he wrote.
- Historical.
    - JOSHUA – details Israel's entrance into Canaan under Joshua's leadership and the occupation of the land promised to them by God.
    - JUDGES – covers a period after the death of Joshua in which Israel was led by a series of regional judges including Gideon, Deborah, and Samson among others. It highlights a pattern of sin – suffering – supplication – salvation throughout the period.
    - RUTH – takes place during the period of the judges and tells the story of a Moabite woman who was faithful to her Jewish mother-in-law even after the death of her husband. Ruth eventually married Boaz and was part of the family tree of Jesus Christ.
    - 1ST AND 2ND SAMUEL – details events during the life of the Prophet who was also the last of the judges. Israel, including the priesthood, was corrupted and demanded a king. Samual anointed Saul as the first king of Israel. Saul was eventually rejected by God and David was anointed king.
    - 1ST AND 2ND KINGS – cover the reign of David's son, Solomon who was blessed with supernature wisdom, but still acted foolishly the result of which was civil war that divided Israel into the Northern Kingdom (Israel) and the Southern Kingdom (Judah). The Prophets Elijah and Elijah are included in the narrative. After a series of corrupt kings with very few righteous kings Israel was conquered by the Assyrians and scattered while Judah fell to the Babylonians with many Jews taken into exile.

    - 1ST AND 2ND CHRONICLES – are an overview of Judah's history. It traces various genealogies including that of King David. It ends with the beginning of the Babylonian captivity.
    - EZRA – begins with the first wave of returning Jewish exiles under the leadership of Zerubbabel who was granted permission to go back to Jerusalem and rebuild the Temple by Cyrus, King of the Persians. It also includes the second wave of returning exiles under Ezra who reestablished the priesthood.
    - NEHEMIAH – covers the return of a third wave of Jewish exiles under the leadership of Nehemiah who rebuilt the wall around Jerusalem and helped reestablish the practice of the Jewish religion. This book ends the account of the return to Jerusalem.
    - ESTHER – is an account of Jewish exiles who remained in Persia when others returned to Jerusalem. It is the life story of Esther and her courageous effort to save her people during the reign of King Xerxes. Despite her Jewish lineage, she eventually became Queen of Persia. This book ends the historical record from Adam through the end of the Old Testament era.
- Wisdom/Poetry.
    - JOB – is a mix of poetry and dialogue describing the life of Job who probably lived during the days of Abraham. Some of the book is to be taken literally, but some is to be taken figuratively.
    - PSALMS – is a collection of hymns most of which were written by David and used in Temple worship.
    - PROVERBS – is a collection of divinely inspired practical wisdom. Most of the 917 proverbs were written by Solomon with the rest probably collected by him.
    - ECCLESIASTES – is a journal written by Solomon that details his quest for satisfaction outside of faith in God. It concludes with his summary that life with God is meaningless.
    - SONG OF SONGS – is a love poem written by Solomon that describes the beauty of the marital relationship.

ISAIAH

- Beginning with Isaiah the last 17 books of the Old Testament are prophetic books.
- The prophetic books are divided into two sections.
    - Major:
        - Isaiah.
        - Jeremiah.
        - Lamentations.
        - Ezekiel.
        - Daniel.
    - Minor:
        - Hosea.
        - Joel.
        - Amos.
        - Obadiah.
        - Jonah.
        - Micah.
        - Nahum.
        - Habakkuk.
        - Zephaniah.
        - Haggai.
        - Zechariah.
        - Malachi.
- The book of Isaiah was possibly two books in its original form, both written by Isaiah.
    - Isaiah was probably a resident of Jerusalem with access to the royal court because (according to tradition) he was King Uzziah's cousin.
    - He prophesied in Judah during the reigns of Uzziah (790–739BC), Jotham (750–732BC), Ahaz (735–715BC), and Hezekiah (715–686BC).
      *NOTE: See 2 Kings 14-20; 2 Chronicles 26-32)
    - Hosea and Micah were also prophets in Judah during Isaiah's lifetime.
- The Book of Isaiah is quoted at least 67 times in the New Testament, including:
    - *"…the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned*" (4:16).
    - *"He took up our infirmities and bore our diseases"* (Mattthew 8:17).
    - *"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor"* (Luke 4:18-19).

- *"The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; in him the Gentiles will hope"* (Romans 15:12).

- A word about prophets and prophecy.
  - Prophecy is not only prediction. More often it is declaring a truth by the inspiration of God. When prophecy is predictive it can only be by the direct inspiration of God.
  - Some of the predictive prophecies recorded were fulfilled during the Old Testament era, others were fulfilled with the coming of Christ, and others have yet to be fulfilled.
  - Chronological order, especially when it comes to dates, is not always a prophetic concern.
  - What God said about prophets (Deuteronomy 18:18-22).
  - God chooses them. *I will raise up for them a prophet… and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him.*
  - They have authority because they speak God's word. *I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name.*
  - There is a penalty for false prophecy, or predictions that do not come to pass. *But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded… is to be put to death… If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken.*

OUTLINE

- The Retribution of God (1–39).
  - The Lord's indictment of Judah (1–6)
    - God's case.
      - *"Woe to the sinful nation, a people whose guilt is great, a brood of evildoers, children given to corruption! They have forsaken the LORD; they have spurned the Holy One of Israel and turned their backs on him."* (1:4)
      - *"Wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight; stop doing wrong. Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow."* (1:16-17)
      - *"Come now, let us settle the matter," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the good things of the land; but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword." For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.*

- Future consequences.
    - *The LORD Almighty has a day in store for all the proud and lofty… The arrogance of man will be brought low and human pride humbled; the LORD alone will be exalted in that day, and the idols will totally disappear.* (2:12-18)
    - *See now, the Lord, the LORD Almighty, is about to take from Jerusalem and Judah both supply and support: all supplies of food and all supplies of water…* (3:1)
    - *Instead of fragrance there will be a stench; instead of a sash, a rope; instead of well-dressed hair, baldness; instead of fine clothing, sackcloth; instead of beauty, branding.* (3:24)
    - *Therefore, my people will go into exile for lack of understanding; those of high rank will die of hunger and the common people will be parched with thirst.* (5:13)
- Isaiah's commission.
    - *In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook, and the temple was filled with smoke. "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty." Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"* (6:1-8)
    - *He said, "Go and tell this people: " 'Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.' Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise, they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed." Then I said, "For how long, Lord?" And he answered: "Until the cities lie ruined and without inhabitant, until the houses are left deserted, and the fields ruined and ravaged, until the LORD has sent everyone far away and the land is utterly forsaken. And*

though a tenth remains in the land, it will again be laid waste. But as the terebinth and oak leave stumps when they are cut down, so the holy seed will be the stump in the land." (6:9-13)

- Prophecies of judgement and deliverance (chaps. 7–12)
- Jesus Christ (7-9, 11)
    - *Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel.* (7:14)
    - *The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.* (9:2)
    - *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.* (9:6-7)
    - *A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him— the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD— and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them.* (11:1-6)
- Concerning Judah – The Southern Kingdom (7-9).
    - *In that day the Lord will use a razor hired from beyond the Euphrates River—the king of Assyria—to shave your head and private parts, and to cut off your beard also.* (7:20)
    - *…therefore, the Lord is about to bring against them the mighty floodwaters of the Euphrates— the king of Assyria with all his pomp. It will overflow all its channels, run over all its banks and sweep on into Judah, swirling over it, passing through it and reaching up to the neck. Its outspread wings will cover the breadth of your land, Immanuel!* (Isaiah 8:7-8)

- *Do not call conspiracy everything this people calls a conspiracy; do not fear what they fear, and do not dread it. The LORD Almighty is the one you are to regard as holy, he is the one you are to fear, he is the one you are to dread.* (8:12 -13)
- *Distressed and hungry, they will roam through the land; when they are famished, they will become enraged and, looking upward, will curse their king and their God. Then they will look toward the earth and see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom, and they will be thrust into utter darkness.* (8:21-22)

- Concerning Israel (9–10).
  - *The Lord has sent a message against Jacob; it will fall on Israel.* (9:8)
  - *So, the LORD will cut off from Israel both head and tail, both palm branch and reed in a single day; the elders and dignitaries are the head, the prophets who teach lies are the tail. Those who guide this people mislead them, and those who are guided are led astray. Therefore, the Lord will take no pleasure in the young men, nor will he pity the fatherless and widows, for everyone is ungodly and wicked, every mouth speaks folly. Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away, his hand is still upraised.* (9:14-17)
  - *Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people, making widows their prey and robbing the fatherless. What will you do on the day of reckoning, when disaster comes from afar? To whom will you run for help? Where will you leave your riches? Nothing will remain but to cringe among the captives or fall among the slain. Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away, his hand is still upraised.* (10:1-4)
- Judgment on the nations (chaps. 10–23)
  - Assyria. *Woe to the Assyrian, the rod of my anger, in whose hand is the club of my wrath! I send him against a godless nation, I dispatch him against a people who anger me, to seize loot and snatch plunder, and to trample them down like mud in the streets. But this is not what he intends, this is not what he has in mind; his purpose is to destroy, to put an end to many nations.* (10:5-7)
  - Babylon. *A prophecy against Babylon… The Lord Almighty is mustering an army for war. They come from faraway lands, from the ends of the heavens — the Lord and the weapons of his wrath — to destroy the whole country. Wail, for the day of the Lord is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty... Terror will seize them, pain and anguish will grip them; they will writhe like a woman in la-*

bor… I will punish the world for its evil, the wicked for their sins. I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty and will humble the pride of the ruthless. (13:1-13)

- Philistia. *Do not rejoice, all you Philistines, that the rod that struck you is broken; from the root of that snake will spring up a viper, its fruit will be a darting, venomous serpent.* (14:29)
- Moab. *A prophecy against Moab… Moab is ruined, destroyed in a night! ...Every head is shaved, and every beard cut off. In the streets they wear sackcloth; on the roofs and in the public squares they all wail, prostrate with weeping... Therefore, the armed men of Moab cry out, and their hearts are faint.* (15:1-4) *Moab's splendor and all her many people will be despised, and her survivors will be very few and feeble.* (16:14)
- Damascus. *A prophecy against Damascus: "See, Damascus will no longer be a city but will become a heap of ruins.* (17:1)
- Cush. *Woe to the land of whirring wings along the rivers of Cush… Go, swift messengers, to a people tall and smooth-skinned, to a people feared far and wide, an aggressive nation of strange speech, whose land is divided by rivers... This is what the Lord says to me: "I will remain quiet and will look on from my dwelling place, like shimmering heat in the sunshine, like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest." ...They will all be left to the mountain birds of prey and to the wild animals; the birds will feed on them all summer, the wild animals all winter.* (18:1-6)
- Egypt. *A prophecy against Egypt: See, the Lord rides on a swift cloud and is coming to Egypt. The idols of Egypt tremble before him, and the hearts of the Egyptians melt with fear. "I will stir up Egyptian against Egyptian— brother will fight against brother, neighbor against neighbor, city against city, kingdom against kingdom. The Egyptians will lose heart, and I will bring their plans to nothing; they will consult the idols and the spirits of the dead, the mediums and the spiritists. I will hand the Egyptians over to the power of a cruel master, and a fierce king will rule over them," declares the Lord, the Lord Almighty.* (19:1-4)
- Jerusalem. *A prophecy against the Valley of Vision: What troubles you now, that you have all gone up on the roofs, you town so full of commotion, you city of tumult and revelry? Your slain were not killed by the sword, nor did they die in battle. All your leaders have fled together; they have been captured without using the bow. All you who were caught were taken prisoner together, having fled while the enemy was still far away.* (22:1-3)

    - Tyre. *A prophecy against Tyre: Wail, you ships of Tarshish! For Tyre is destroyed and left without house or harbor... Be silent, you people of the island and you merchants of Sidon, whom the seafarers have enriched... Be ashamed, Sidon, and you fortress of the sea, for the sea has spoken… When word comes to Egypt, they will be in anguish at the report from Tyre.* (23:1-5)
- Punishment and blessing (24–27)
    - *See, the LORD is going to lay waste the earth and devastate it; he will ruin its face and scatter its inhabitants— it will be the same for priest as for people, for the master as for his servant, for the mistress as for her servant, for seller as for buyer, for borrower as for lender, for debtor as for creditor. The earth will be completely laid waste and totally plundered. The LORD has spoken this word.* (24:1-3)
    - *…The floodgates of the heavens are opened, the foundations of the earth shake. The earth is broken up, the earth is split asunder, the earth is violently shaken. The earth reels like a drunkard, it sways like a hut in the wind; so heavy upon it is the guilt of its rebellion that it falls—never to rise again. In that day the LORD will punish the powers in the heavens above and the kings on the earth below. They will be herded together like prisoners bound in a dungeon; they will be shut up in prison and be punished after many days. The moon will be dismayed, the sun ashamed; for the LORD Almighty will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before its elders—with great glory.* (24:18-23)
    - *On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples… On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces… In that day they will say, "Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us...* (25:6-12)
- Woes (28–33).
    - *Therefore, hear the word of the LORD, you scoffers… You boast, "We have entered into a covenant with death, with the realm of the dead we have made an agreement... for we have made a lie our refuge and falsehood our hiding place." So, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will make justice the measuring line and righteousness the plumb line; hail will sweep away your refuge, the lie, and water will overflow your hiding place. Your covenant with death will be annulled; your agreement with the realm of the dead will not stand.* (28:14-19)
    - *The Lord says: "These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far*

from me. Their worship of me is based on merely human rules they have been taught. Therefore, once more I will astound these people with wonder upon wonder; the wisdom of the wise will perish, the intelligence of the intelligent will vanish." Woe to those who go to great depths to hide their plans from the LORD, who do their work in darkness and think, "Who sees us? Who will know?" ...Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, "You did not make me"? Can the pot say to the potter, "You know nothing"? (29:13-16)

- *"Woe to the obstinate children," declares the LORD, "to those who carry out plans that are not mine, forming an alliance, but not by my Spirit, heaping sin upon sin… everyone will be put to shame because of a people useless to them, who bring neither help nor advantage, but only shame and disgrace." ...Therefore, this is what the Holy One of Israel says: "Because you have rejected this message, relied on oppression and depended on deceit, this sin will become for you like a high wall, cracked and bulging, that collapses suddenly, in an instant. It will break in pieces like pottery, shattered so mercilessly that among its pieces not a fragment will be found for taking coals from a hearth or scooping water out of a cistern."* (30:1-5, 12-14)
- *Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, who rely on horses, who trust in the multitude of their chariots and in the great strength of their horsemen, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel, or seek help from the LORD.* (31:1)
- *Woe to you, destroyer, you who have not been destroyed! Woe to you, betrayer, you who have not been betrayed! When you stop destroying, you will be destroyed; when you stop betraying, you will be betrayed.* (33:1)

- Judgement and blessing (chaps. 34–35)
  - *The LORD is angry with all nations; his wrath is on all their armies. He will totally destroy them; he will give them over to slaughter. Their slain will be thrown out, their dead bodies will stink; the mountains will be soaked with their blood. All the stars in the sky will be dissolved and the heavens rolled up like a scroll; all the starry host will fall like withered leaves from the vine, like shriveled figs from the fig tree.* (34:2-4)
  - *Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert. The burning sand will become a pool, the thirsty ground bubbling springs... And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness; it will be for those who walk on that Way. The unclean will*

not journey on it; wicked fools will not go about on it... But only the redeemed will walk there, and those the LORD has rescued will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away. (35:5-10)

- Historical interlude (36–39).
  - King Sennacherib (Assyria) threatens Jerusalem.
    - *In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah's reign, Sennacherib king of Assyria attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them* (36:1 cc. 2Ki 18:13,17–37; 2Ch 32:9–19).
    - *Then the king of Assyria sent his field commander with a large army… [to] Jerusalem… Eliakim… the palace administrator, Shebna the secretary, and Joah… the recorder went out to him.* (36:2-3)
    - The message from Sennacherib: *"On what are you basing this confidence of yours? …On whom are you depending, that you rebel against me? …I know you are depending on Egypt… But if you say to me, 'We are depending on the LORD our God'— isn't he the one whose high places and altars Hezekiah removed? …Come now, make a bargain with… the king of Assyria… I come to attack and destroy this land… The LORD himself told me to march against this country and destroy it."* (36:4-10)
    - *When King Hezekiah heard this, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and went into the temple of the LORD. He sent Eliakim the palace administrator, Shebna the secretary, and the leading priests, all wearing sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah… When King Hezekiah's officials came to Isaiah, Isaiah said to them, "This is what the LORD says: Do not be afraid of what you have heard—those words with which the… king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Listen! When he hears a certain report, I will make him want to return to his own country, and there I will have him cut down with the sword."* (37:1-7)
    - *Sennacherib received a report that Tirhakah, the king of Cush, was marching out to fight against him. When he heard it, he sent messengers to Hezekiah with this word: "…Do not let the god you depend on deceive you when he says, 'Jerusalem will not be given into the hands of… Assyria.' Surely you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the countries, destroying them completely... Did the gods of the nations that were destroyed by my predecessors deliver them?* (37:9-13)
    - *Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers and read it. Then he went up to the temple of the LORD and spread it*

out before the LORD. And Hezekiah prayed to the LORD: "LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. Give ear, LORD, and hear; open your eyes, LORD, and see; listen to all the words Sennacherib has sent to ridicule the living God... the Assyrian kings have laid waste all these peoples and their lands. They have thrown their gods into the fire and destroyed them, for they were not gods but only wood and stone, fashioned by human hands. Now, LORD our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, LORD, are the only God." (37:14 -20)

- *Then Isaiah… sent a message to Hezekiah: "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Because you have prayed to me concerning Sennacherib king of Assyria… 'He will not enter this city or shoot an arrow here. He will not come before it with shield or build a siege ramp against it. By the way that he came he will return; he will not enter this city,' declares the LORD. 'I will defend this city and save it, for my sake and for the sake of David my servant!'"* (37:21, 33-35)
- *Then the angel of the LORD went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the Assyrian camp... Sennacherib… withdrew. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there. One day, while he was worshiping in the temple of his god Nisrok, his sons Adrammelek and Sharezer killed him with the sword… And Esarhaddon his son succeeded him as king.* (37:36-38)

- Hezekiah's illness.
  - *In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah… went to him and said, "This is what the LORD says: Put your house in order, because you are going to die; you will not recover."* (38:1)
  - *Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, "Remember, LORD, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.* (38:2-3)
  - *Then the word of the LORD came to Isaiah: "Go and tell Hezekiah… 'I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will add fifteen years to your life. And I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria. I will defend this city. This is the LORD's sign to you that the LORD will do what he has promised: I will make the shadow cast by the sun go back the ten steps it has gone down on the stairway of Ahaz.'" So the sunlight went back the ten*

steps it had gone down. (38:4-9)

- Judah's captivity in Babylon (chaps. 39)
  - *At that time Marduk-Baladan son of Baladan king of Babylon sent Hezekiah letters and a gift, because he had heard of his illness and recovery. Hezekiah received the envoys gladly and showed them what was in his storehouses—the silver, the gold, the spices, the fine olive oil—his entire armory and everything found among his treasures. There was nothing in his palace or in all his kingdom that Hezekiah did not show them.* (39:1-2)
  - *Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah… The time will surely come when everything in your palace, and all that your predecessors have stored up until this day, will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left… your own flesh and blood who will be born to you, will be taken away, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon."* (39:5-7)

- Prophecies of Restoration (chaps. 40–66)
  - Deliverance of God's People (chaps. 40–48)
    - The World: *Comfort, comfort my people… A voice of one calling: 'In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all people will see it together. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.'* (40:1-5)
    - Israel: *"But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, you descendants of Abraham my friend, I took you from the ends of the earth, from its farthest corners I called you. I said, 'You are my servant'; I have chosen you and have not rejected you. So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."* (41:8-10)
    - Concerning Christ: *"Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations. … A bruised reed he will not break… he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. …I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not yield my glory to another or my praise to idols. See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare; before they spring into being I announce them to you."* (42:1-9)
    - A promise to regather Israel: *this is what the LORD says… I have summoned you by name; you are mine... Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love*

you, I will give people in exchange for you, nations in exchange for your life. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth… (43:1-7)

- Only the Lord is God: *This is what the LORD says… I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God. Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it... Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one.* (44:6-8)
- Promise to rebuild Jerusalem: *This is what the LORD says… I am the LORD, the Maker of all things, who stretches out the heavens, who spreads out the earth by myself, who foils the signs of false prophets and makes fools of diviners, who overthrows the learning of the wise and turns it into nonsense, who carries out the words of his servants and fulfills the predictions of his messengers, who says of Jerusalem, 'It shall be inhabited,' of the towns of Judah, 'They shall be rebuilt,' and of their ruins, 'I will restore them… who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please; he will say of Jerusalem, "Let it be rebuilt," and of the temple, "Let its foundations be laid."* (44:24-28)
- Prophecy regarding Babylon: *Go down, sit in the dust… sit on the ground without a throne… Your nakedness will be exposed and your shame uncovered. I will take vengeance; I will spare no one… Sit in silence, go into darkness… I was angry with my people and desecrated my inheritance; I gave them into your hand, and you showed them no mercy… you did not consider these things or reflect on what might happen… You have trusted in your wickedness and have said, 'No one sees me.' Your wisdom and knowledge mislead you… These are not coals for warmth; this is not a fire to sit by... there is not one that can save you.* (47:1-15)
- Another promise to restore Israel: *Listen to me, Jacob, Israel, whom I have called… The Lord's chosen ally will carry out his purpose against Babylon… I am the Lord your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go. If only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river, your well-being like the waves of the sea. Your descendants would have been like the sand, your children like its numberless grains; their name would never be blotted out nor destroyed from before me. Leave Babylon… The Lord has*

redeemed his servant Jacob... There is no peace... for the wicked. (48:12-22)

- Messianic Prophecies (chaps. 49–57)
    - *It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth… Kings will see you and stand up, princes will see and bow down, because of the LORD, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.* (49:6-7)
    - *The Sovereign LORD has given me a well-instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being instructed. The Sovereign LORD has opened my ears; I have not been rebellious; I have not turned away. I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.* (50:4-6)
    - *"Listen to me, my people; hear me, my nation: Instruction will go out from me; my justice will become a light to the nations. My righteousness draws near speedily, my salvation is on the way, and my arm will bring justice to the nations... Lift up your eyes to the heavens, look at the earth beneath; the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment and its inhabitants die like flies. But my salvation will last forever, my righteousness will never fail... Do not fear the reproach of mere mortals or be terrified by their insults… my righteousness will last forever, my salvation through all generations... I have put my words in your mouth and covered you with the shadow of my hand… You are my people.'* (51:4-16)
    - *How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation… When the LORD returns to Zion, they will see it with their own eyes. Burst into songs of joy together, you ruins of Jerusalem, for the LORD has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem… and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.* (52:7-10)
    - *He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by [humanity], a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. Surely, he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by*

him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth... For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people, he was punished. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer… After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied… For he bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors. (53:1-12)

- *Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare. Give ear and come to me; listen, that you may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David... Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near.* (55:1-6)

- Prophecies regarding restoration and fulfilment (chaps. 58–66)
  - *Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice… to set the oppressed free… Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs… and will strengthen your frame... then you will find your joy in the LORD… For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.* (58:6-14)
  - *Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you*

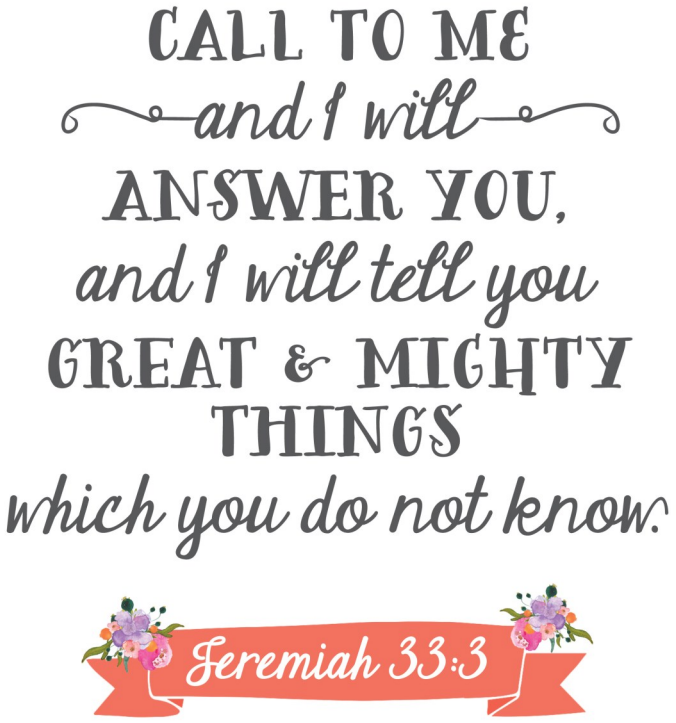
from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear. For your hands are stained with blood, your fingers with guilt. Your lips have spoken falsely, and your tongue mutters wicked things. No one calls for justice; no one pleads a case with integrity. They rely on empty arguments, they utter lies; they conceive trouble and give birth to evil... Their deeds are evil deeds, and acts of violence are in their hands. Their feet rush into sin; they are swift to shed innocent blood. They pursue evil schemes; acts of violence mark their ways... Like the blind we grope along the wall, feeling our way like people without eyes... For our offenses are many in your sight, and our sins testify against us. Our offenses are ever with us, and we acknowledge our iniquities: rebellion and treachery against the LORD, turning our backs on our God, inciting revolt and oppression, uttering lies our hearts have conceived... The LORD looked and was displeased that there was no justice. He saw that there was no one, he was appalled that there was no one to intervene… He put on righteousness as his breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on his head... For he will come like a pent-up flood that the breath of the LORD drives along. The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins… (59:1-20)

- *The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve… to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair… Instead of your shame you will receive a double portion, and instead of disgrace you will rejoice in your inheritance... and everlasting joy will be yours... In my faithfulness I will reward my people and make an everlasting covenant with them... so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.* (61:1-11)
- *See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more. Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years…*

No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat... my chosen ones will long enjoy the work of their hands. They will not labor in vain, nor will they bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the LORD… Before they call, I will answer; while they are still speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox… They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, says the LORD. (65:17-25)

- *As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me… so will your name and descendants endure... all [humanity] will come and bow down before me… And they will go out and look on the dead bodies of those who rebelled against me; the worms that eat them will not die, the fire that burns them will not be quenched, and they will be loathsome to all [humanity].* (66:22-24)

Next Week: Jeremiah, Lamentations



Lesson 19

JEREMIAH

- The book of Jeremiah does not follow a topical or chronological order.
- Jeremiah's message was to one of impending judgement because the people rebelled against God and refused to repent despite numerous warnings.
- Jeremiah is known as the "weeping prophet."

OUTLINE

- Introduction (1)
    - Jeremiah's background.
      The words of Jeremiah… one of the priests at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin. The word of the LORD came to him in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah… and through the reign of Jehoiakim… down to the fifth month of the eleventh year of Zedekiah… when the people of Jerusalem went into exile. (1:1-3)
      *2 Kings 22-25; 2 Chronicles 22-36)
    - Jeremiah's call.
      The word of the Lord came to me, saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." "Alas, Sovereign Lord," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am too young." But the Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am too young.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the Lord. Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant." (1:4-10)
- Prophecies concerning Judgement on Judah (chaps. 2–25)
    - *I brought you into a fertile land to eat its fruit and rich produce. But you came and defiled my land and made my inheritance detestable. The priests did not ask, 'Where is the LORD?' Those who deal with the law did not know me; the leaders rebelled against me. The prophets prophesied by Baal, following worthless idols.* (2:7-8)
    - *They have forsaken me… why go to Egypt to drink water from the Nile? And why go to Assyria to drink water from the Euphrates? Your wickedness will punish you; your backsliding will rebuke you. Consider then and realize how evil and bitter it is for you when you forsake the LORD your God and have no awe of me…* (2:13-19)
    - *Have you seen what faithless Israel has done? She has gone up on every high hill and under every spreading tree and has committed adultery there. I thought that after she had done all this, she*

would return to me but she did not, and her unfaithful sister Judah saw it. I gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her away because of all her adulteries. Yet I saw that her unfaithful sister Judah had no fear; she also went out and committed adultery. Because Israel's immorality mattered so little to her, she defiled the land and committed adultery with stone and wood. In spite of all this, her unfaithful sister Judah did not return to me with all her heart, but only in pretense… (3:6-10)

- *Go up and down the streets of Jerusalem, look around and consider… If you can find but one person who deals honestly and seeks the truth, I will forgive this city... Why should I forgive you? Your children have forsaken me and sworn by gods that are not gods. I supplied all their needs, yet they committed adultery and thronged to the houses of prostitutes... Should I not punish them for this? declares the LORD. "Should I not avenge myself on such a nation as this? …The people of Israel and the people of Judah have been utterly unfaithful to me…* (5:1-11).
- *Look, an army is coming from the land of the north… They are armed with bow and spear; they are cruel and show no mercy... they come like men in battle formation to attack you… Do not go out to the fields or walk on the roads, for the enemy has a sword, and there is terror on every side. Put on sackcloth, my people, and roll in ashes; mourn with bitter wailing… for suddenly the destroyer will come upon us.* (6:22-26)
- *Hear the word of the LORD, all you people of Judah who come through these gates to worship the LORD... Reform your ways and your actions, and I will let you live in this place... If you really change your ways and your actions and deal with each other justly, if you do not oppress the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow and do not shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not follow other gods… then I will let you live in this place, in the land I gave your ancestors… But look, you are trusting in deceptive words that are worthless. Will you steal and murder, commit adultery and perjury, burn incense to Baal and follow other gods… and then come and stand before me in this house, which bears my Name, and say, "We are safe"—safe to do all these detestable things? Has this house, which bears my Name, become a den of robbers to you? …I have been watching! declares the LORD.* (7:2-11)
- *I will make Jerusalem a heap of ruins, a haunt of jackals; and I will lay waste the towns of Judah so no one can live there.* (9:11)
- *Then the LORD said to me, "Do not pray for the well-being of this people. Although they fast, I will not listen to their cry; though they offer burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Instead, I will destroy them with the sword, famine and plague." But I said, "Alas, Sovereign LORD! The prophets keep telling them, 'You will not see the sword or suffer famine. In-*

deed, I will give you lasting peace in this place.'" Then the LORD said to me, "The prophets are prophesying lies in my name. I have not sent them or appointed them or spoken to them... those same prophets will perish by sword and famine. And the people they are prophesying to will be thrown out into the streets of Jerusalem… There will be no one to bury them, their wives, their sons and their daughters. I will pour out on them the calamity they deserve. (14:11-16)

- *Then the LORD said to me: "Even if Moses and Samuel were to stand before me, my heart would not go out to this people. Send them away from my presence! Let them go! And if they ask you, 'Where shall we go?' tell them, 'Those destined for death, to death; those for the sword, to the sword; those for starvation, to starvation; those for captivity, to captivity.' I will send four kinds of destroyers against them… the sword to kill and the dogs to drag away and the birds and the wild animals to devour and destroy. I will make them abhorrent to all the kingdoms of the earth…*(15:1-4)
- *Go and buy a clay jar from a potter. Take along some of the elders of the people and of the priests and go out to the Valley of Ben Hinnom, near the entrance of the Potsherd Gate. There proclaim… This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says… I am going to bring a disaster on this place that will make the ears of everyone who hears of it tingle. For they have forsaken me and made this a place of foreign gods… and they have filled this place with the blood of the innocent. They have built the high places of Baal to burn their children in the fire as offerings to Baal… I will devastate this city and make it an object of horror and scorn… Then break the jar while those who go with you are watching, and say to them, 'This is what the LORD Almighty says: I will smash this nation and this city just as this potter's jar is smashed and cannot be repaired... Jeremiah then returned from Topheth… and stood in the court of the LORD's temple and said to all the people, This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says… When the priest Pashhur… the official in charge of the temple of the LORD, heard Jeremiah prophesying these things, he had Jeremiah… beaten and put in the stocks at the Upper Gate of Benjamin… The next day, when Pashhur released him from the stocks, Jeremiah said to him… this is what the LORD says: 'I will make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends; with your own eyes you will see them fall by the sword of their enemies. I will give all Judah into the hands of the king of Babylon, who will carry them away to Babylon or put them to the sword. I will deliver all the wealth of this city into the hands of their enemies… And you, Pashhur, and all who live in your house will go into exile to Babylon. There you will die and be buried, you and all your friends to whom you have prophesied lies.'"* (19:1-20:6)

- *The word came to Jeremiah from the LORD when King Zedekiah sent to him Pashhur… and the priest Zephaniah… They said: "Inquire now of the LORD for us because Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon is attacking us... But Jeremiah answered them, "Tell Zedekiah, 'This is what the LORD… says: I am about to turn against you the weapons of war that are in your hands, which you are using to fight the king of Babylon… I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and a mighty arm in furious anger and in great wrath... After that… I will give Zedekiah… his officials and the people in this city… into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar… He will put them to the sword; he will show them no mercy or pity or compassion… I have determined to do this city harm and not good… It will be given into the hands of the king of Babylon, and he will destroy it with fire.'* (22:1-10)
- *"The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will live in safety... the days are coming," declares the LORD, "when people will no longer say, 'As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt,' but they will say, 'As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the descendants of Israel up out of the land of the north… Then they will live in their own land."* (23:5-8)
- *The word came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah… So, Jeremiah the prophet said to all the people of Judah and to all those living in Jerusalem: For twenty-three years… I have spoken to you again and again, but you have not listened… But you did not listen to me," declares the LORD, "and you have aroused my anger with what your hands have made, and you have brought harm to yourselves." Therefore… I will summon all the peoples of the north and my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon… and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants… I will completely destroy them… and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years. But when the seventy years are fulfilled, I will punish the king of Babylon and his nation… for their guilt… I will repay them according to their deeds and the work of their hands."* (25:1-14)

- A plot against Jeremiah (chaps. 26–29)
  - *…as soon as Jeremiah finished telling all the people everything the LORD had commanded him to say, the priests, the prophets and all the people seized him and said, "You must die! Why do you prophesy in the LORD's name that this house… and this city will be desolate and deserted?" And all the people crowded around Jeremiah in the house of the LORD... Then the priests and the prophets said to the officials and all the people, "This man should be sentenced to death because he has prophesied against*

this city…" Then Jeremiah said… "The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and this city… Now reform your ways and your actions and obey the LORD your God. Then the LORD will relent and not bring the disaster he has pronounced against you. As for me, I am in your hands; do with me whatever you think is good and right. Be assured, however, that if you put me to death, you will bring the guilt of innocent blood on yourselves and on this city and on those who live in it, for in truth the LORD has sent me to you to speak all these words in your hearing." Then the officials and all the people said to the priests and the prophets, "This man should not be sentenced to death! He has spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God."(26:7-16)

- *Early in the reign of Zedekiah… this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD… "Make a yoke out of straps and crossbars and put it on your neck. Then send word to the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon… and say, 'This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: …I will give all your countries into the hands of my servant Nebuchadnezzar… All nations will serve him and his son and his grandson until the time for his land comes; then many nations and great kings will subjugate him. If, however, any nation or kingdom will not serve Nebuchadnezzar… or bow its neck under his yoke, I will punish that nation with the sword, famine and plague… So do not listen to your prophets, your diviners, your interpreters of dreams, your mediums or your sorcerers who tell you, 'You will not serve the king of Babylon.' They prophesy lies to you that will only serve to remove you far from your lands… But if any nation will bow its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him, I will let that nation remain in its own land… declares the LORD.'"* (27:1-11)
- *In the fifth month of that same year… the prophet Hananiah… said to me in the house of the LORD in the presence of the priests and all the people: "This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon. Within two years I will bring back to this place all the articles of the LORD's house that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon removed from here and took to Babylon. I will also bring back to this place Jehoiachin son of Jehoiakim king of Judah and all the other exiles from Judah who went to Babylon… for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.'"*

  Then the prophet Jeremiah replied to the prophet Hananiah before the priests and all the people who were standing in the house of the LORD... "Amen! May the LORD do so! May the LORD fulfill the words you have prophesied… From early times the prophets who preceded you and me have prophesied war, disaster and plague against many countries and great kingdoms. But the prophet who prophesies peace will be recognized as one truly sent by the LORD only if his prediction comes true." Then the prophet

Hananiah took the yoke off the neck of the prophet Jeremiah and broke it, and he said before all the people, "This is what the LORD says: 'In the same way I will break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon off the neck of all the nations within two years.'" At this, the prophet Jeremiah went on his way. (28:1-11)

- *After the prophet Hananiah had broken the yoke off the neck of the prophet Jeremiah, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: "Go and tell Hananiah, '…You have broken a wooden yoke, but in its place you will get a yoke of iron... I will put an iron yoke on the necks of all these nations to make them serve Nebuchadnezzar… and they will serve him... Then the prophet Jeremiah said to Hananiah the prophet, "…The LORD has not sent you, yet you have persuaded this nation to trust in lies. Therefore, this is what the LORD says: 'I am about to remove you from the face of the earth. This very year you are going to die, because you have preached rebellion against the LORD.'" In the seventh month of that same year, Hananiah the prophet died.* (28:12-17)

- Prophecies of the Restoration (chaps. 29–33)
  - *This is the text of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders among the exiles and to the priests, the prophets and all the other people Nebuchadnezzar had carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon... "Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters… Increase in number there… Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city… Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper... Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you... They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them," declares the LORD... "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you… plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you… and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you… and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile... Therefore, hear the word of the LORD, all you exiles whom I have sent away from Jerusalem to Babylon..." This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says about Ahab son of Kolaiah and Zedekiah son of Maaseiah, who are prophesying lies to you in my name: "I will deliver them into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he will put them to death before your very eyes. Because of them, all the exiles from Judah who are in Babylon will use this curse: 'May the LORD treat you like Zedekiah and Ahab, whom the king of Babylon burned in the fire.' For they have done outrageous things*

in Israel; they have committed adultery with their neighbors' wives, and in my name they have uttered lies—which I did not authorize. I know it and am a witness to it," declares the LORD. (29:1-23)

- *This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "When I bring them back from captivity, the people in the land of Judah and in its towns will once again use these words: 'The LORD bless you, you prosperous city, you sacred mountain.' People will live together in Judah and all its towns—farmers and those who move about with their flocks. I will refresh the weary and satisfy the faint… The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will plant the kingdoms of Israel and Judah… The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah... I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."* (31:23-24)

- The fall of Jerusalem (32-45)
  *To help make sense of this section it has been placed in chronological order.
  - *In the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD: "Take a scroll and write on it all the words I have spoken to you concerning Israel, Judah and all the other nations from the time I began speaking to you in the reign of Josiah till now. Perhaps when the people of Judah hear about every disaster, I plan to inflict on them, they will each turn from their wicked ways; then I will forgive their wickedness and their sin." So, Jeremiah called Baruch son of Neriah, and while Jeremiah dictated all the words the LORD had spoken to him, Baruch wrote them on the scroll.* (36:1-4)
  - *Baruch… read to all the people at the LORD's temple the words of Jeremiah from the scroll. When Micaiah… heard all the words of the LORD from the scroll, he went down to the secretary's room in the royal palace, where all the officials were sitting… [and] told them everything he had heard Baruch read to the people from the scroll… the officials sent Jehudi… to say to Baruch, "Bring the scroll from which you have read to the people and come." So, Baruch… went to them… When they heard all these words, they looked at each other in fear and said to Baruch, "We must report all these words to the king." …You and Jeremiah, go and hide. Don't let anyone know where you are." After they put the scroll in the room of Elishama the secretary, they went to the king in the courtyard and reported everything to him. The king sent Jehudi to get the scroll, and Jehudi… read it to the king…*

[who] was sitting in the winter apartment, with a fire burning… Whenever Jehudi had read three or four columns of the scroll, the king cut them off with a scribe's knife and threw them into the firepot, until the entire scroll was burned in the fire. The king and all his attendants who heard all these words showed no fear, nor did they tear their clothes. Even though Elnathan, Delaiah and Gemariah urged the king not to burn the scroll, he would not listen to them. Instead, the king commanded Jerahmeel… Seraiah… Shelemiah… arrest Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet. But the LORD had hidden them. (36:8-26)

- *After the king burned the scroll… the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: "Take another scroll and write on it all the words that were on the first scroll… Also tell Jehoiakim… 'This is what the LORD says: You burned that scroll and said, "Why did you write on it that the king of Babylon would certainly come and destroy this land… Therefore… this is what the LORD says about Jehoiakim… He will have no one to sit on the throne of David; his body will be thrown out and exposed… I will punish him and his children and his attendants for their wickedness… because they have not listened.'" So Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to the scribe Baruch… and as Jeremiah dictated, Baruch wrote on it all the words of the scroll that Jehoiakim… had burned in the fire. And many similar words were added to them.* (36:27-32)
- *Zedekiah son of Josiah was made king of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; he reigned in place of Jehoiachin… Neither he nor his attendants nor the people of the land paid any attention to the words the LORD had spoken through Jeremiah the prophet. King Zedekiah, however, sent Jehukal… with the priest Zephaniah… to Jeremiah… with this message: "Please pray to the LORD our God for us." …Pharaoh's army had marched out of Egypt, and when the Babylonians who were besieging Jerusalem heard the report about them, they withdrew from Jerusalem. Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet: "Pharaoh's army, which has marched out to support you, will go back to its own land… Then the Babylonians will return and attack this city; they will capture it and burn it down…"* (37:1-10)
- *After the Babylonian army had withdrawn from Jerusalem because of Pharaoh's army, Jeremiah started to leave the city to go to the territory of Benjamin to get his share of the property among the people there. But when he reached the Benjamin Gate, the captain of the guard… arrested him and said, "You are deserting to the Babylonians!" …[he] brought him to the officials. They were angry with Jeremiah and had him beaten and imprisoned in the house of Jonathan the secretary… Jeremiah was put into a vaulted cell in a dungeon, where he remained a long time. Then King Zedekiah sent for him and had him brought to the palace, where he asked him privately, "Is there any word from the*

LORD?" "Yes," Jeremiah replied, "you will be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon." Then Jeremiah said to King Zedekiah, "What crime have I committed against you… that you have put me in prison? …Do not send me back to the house of Jonathan… or I will die there." King Zedekiah then gave orders for Jeremiah to be placed in the courtyard of the guard and given a loaf of bread from the street of the bakers each day… So, Jeremiah remained in the courtyard of the guard. (37:11-21)

- *Then the officials said to the king, "This man should be put to death. He is discouraging the soldiers who are left in this city, as well as all the people, by the things he is saying to them… "He is in your hands," King Zedekiah answered… So, they took Jeremiah and put him into the cistern of Malkijah, the king's son, which was in the courtyard of the guard. They lowered Jeremiah by ropes into the cistern; it had no water in it, only mud, and Jeremiah sank down into the mud. But Ebed-Melek, a Cushite, an official in the royal palace, heard that they had put Jeremiah into the cistern. While the king was sitting in the Benjamin Gate, Ebed-Melek… said to him, "…these men have acted wickedly in all they have done to Jeremiah… They have thrown him into a cistern, where he will starve to death when there is no longer any bread in the city." Then the king commanded Ebed-Melek… "Take thirty men from here with you and lift Jeremiah… out of the cistern before he dies." So Ebed-Melek took the men with him and… they pulled him up with the ropes and lifted him out of the cistern. And Jeremiah remained in the courtyard of the guard*. (38:6-13)
- *…in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah… The army of… Babylon was… besieging Jerusalem, and Jeremiah… was confined in the courtyard of the guard in the royal palace of Judah… Zedekiah… had imprisoned him there, saying, "Why do you prophesy as you do? You say, 'This is what the LORD says: I am about to give this city into the hands of the king of Babylon, and he will capture it. Zedekiah king of Judah will not escape the Babylonians but will certainly be given into the hands of the king of Babylon… He will take Zedekiah to Babylon, where he will remain until I deal with him… If you fight against the Babylonians, you will not succeed.'"* (32:1-5)
- *Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: "…I am about to give this city into the hands of the Babylonians… The Babylonians who are attacking this city will come in and set it on fire; they will burn it down… The people of Israel and Judah have done nothing but evil in my sight… but this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I will surely gather them from all the lands where I banish them in my furious anger and great wrath; I will bring them back to this place and let them live in safety. They will be my people, and I will be their God... I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them… I will re-*

store their fortunes, declares the LORD." (32:26-44)

- *"The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will fulfill the good promise I made to the people of Israel and Judah. In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David's line; he will do what is just and right in the land. In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will live in safety. This is the name by which it will be called: The LORD Our Righteous Savior."* (33:14-16)
- *In the ninth year of Zedekiah… Nebuchadnezzar… marched against Jerusalem with his whole army… on the ninth day of the fourth month of Zedekiah's eleventh year, the city wall was broken through. Then all the officials of the king of Babylon came and took seats in the Middle Gate… Zedekiah… and all the soldiers… fled… But the Babylonian army pursued them and overtook Zedekiah… They captured him and took him to Nebuchadnezzar… the king of Babylon slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes and also killed all the nobles of Judah. Then he put out Zedekiah's eyes and bound him with bronze shackles to take him to Babylon. The Babylonians set fire to the royal palace and the houses of the people and broke down the walls of Jerusalem... [they] carried into exile to Babylon the people who remained in the city… [but] left behind… some of the poor people, who owned nothing… Nebuchadnezzar… had given these orders about Jeremiah… "Take him and look after him; don't harm him but do for him whatever he asks." …They turned him over to Gedaliah (appointed Governor by Nebuchadnezzar, cc. 40:7)… to take him back to his home. So, [Jeremiah] remained among his own people.* (39:1-14)
- *…Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard, who served the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. He set fire to the temple of the LORD, the royal palace and all the houses of Jerusalem. Every important building he burned down. The whole Babylonian army… broke down all the walls around Jerusalem… The Babylonians broke up the bronze pillars, the movable stands and the bronze Sea… and they carried all the bronze to Babylon. They also took away the pots, shovels, wick trimmers, sprinkling bowls, dishes and all the bronze articles used in the temple service... the basins, censers, sprinkling bowls, pots, lampstands, dishes and bowls used for drink offerings—all that were made of pure gold or silver... So, Judah went into captivity, away from her land.* (52:12-27)

  *about 5,000 people were taken to Babylon (52:28-30)
- *When all the army officers and their men who were still in the open country heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah… over the land and had put him in charge of the men, women and children… who had not been carried into exile… they came to Gedaliah at Mizpah—Ishmael… Johanan and Jonathan… Se-*

raiah… and Jaazaniah… and their men. Gedaliah… took an oath to reassure them… "Do not be afraid to serve the Babylonians," he said. "Settle down in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it will go well with you. I… will stay at Mizpah to represent you before the Babylonians who come to us… When all the Jews in Moab, Ammon, Edom and all the other countries heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant in Judah and had appointed Gedaliah… as governor over them, they all came back to the land of Judah… And they harvested an abundance of wine and summer fruit. Johanan… came to Gedaliah at Mizpah and said to him, "Don't you know that Baalis king of the Ammonites has sent Ishmael… to take your life?" But Gedaliah… did not believe them... In the seventh month Ishmael… came with ten men to Gedaliah… While they were eating together… Ishmael… and the ten men who were with him got up and struck down Gedaliah… killing the one whom the king of Babylon had appointed as governor over the land. Ishmael also killed all the men of Judah who were with Gedaliah… as well as the Babylonian soldiers who were there. The day after Gedaliah's assassination, before anyone knew about it, eighty men who had shaved off their beards, torn their clothes and cut themselves came from Shechem, Shiloh and Samaria, bringing grain offerings and incense with them to the house of the LORD. Ishmael… son of Nethaniah went out from Mizpah to meet them, weeping as he went. When he met them, he said, "Come to Gedaliah… When they went into the city, Ishmael… and the men who were with him slaughtered them and threw them into a cistern... Ishmael made captives of all the rest of the people who were in Mizpah… (40:7-41:10)

- *Then Johanan… and all the army officers who were with him led away all the people… who had survived… they went on, stopping… near Bethlehem on their way to Egypt to escape the Babylonians. …Then all the army officers, including Johanan… approached Jeremiah… and said to him, "Please hear our petition and pray to the LORD your God for this …remnant... Pray that the LORD your God will tell us where we should go and what we should do." "I have heard you," replied Jeremiah the prophet. "I will certainly pray to the LORD your God as you have requested…" Ten days later the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah. So, he called together… all the army officers… "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel… says: 'If you stay in this land, I will build you up and not tear you down… Do not be afraid of the king of Babylon… for I am with you and will save you… he will have compassion on you and restore you to your land. However, if you… disobey the LORD your God, and if you say, 'No, we will go and live in Egypt… then the sword you fear will overtake you there…' Remnant of Judah, the LORD has told you, 'Do not go to Egypt….'"* (41:16-42:22)

- *Azariah… and Johanan… and all the arrogant men said to Jeremiah, "You are lying! The LORD our God has not sent you…" So Johanan… and all the people disobeyed the LORD's command to stay in the land of Judah... And they took Jeremiah… Baruch… with them... they entered Egypt in disobedience to the LORD…* (43:2-7)
- *This word came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews living in… Egypt: "…You saw the great disaster I brought on Jerusalem… They aroused my anger by burning incense to and worshiping other gods that neither they nor you nor your ancestors ever knew... Why arouse my anger with what your hands have made, burning incense to other gods in Egypt, where you have come to live? You will destroy yourselves… I will take away the remnant of Judah who were determined to go to Egypt… From the least to the greatest, they will die by sword or famine..." Then all the men who knew that their wives were burning incense to other gods, along with all the women who were present… and all the people living in …Egypt, said to Jeremiah, "We will not listen to the message you have spoken to us in the name of the LORD! We will certainly do everything we said we would: We will burn incense to the Queen of Heaven and will pour out drink offerings to her…" Then Jeremiah said to all the people… "…You and your wives have done what you said you would do… 'I will punish you in this place,' declares the LORD… 'I am going to deliver Pharaoh… into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar… king of Babylon, the enemy who wanted to kill him.'"* (44)

- Prophecies concerning the Nations (chaps. 46–51)
  - Prophecy against Egypt (chap. 46)
  - Prophecy against Philistia (chap. 47)
  - Prophecy against Moab (chap. 48)
  - Prophecy against Ammon (49:1–6)
  - Prophecy against Edom (49:7–22)
  - Prophecy against Damascus (49:23–27)
  - Prophecy against Kedar and Hazor (49:28–33)
  - Prophecy against Elam (49:34–39)
  - Prophecy against Babylon (chaps. 50–51)
  - The fate of Jerusalem (52:1–23)
  - The fall of Zedekiah (52:1–11)
  - The destruction of the city (52:12–16)
  - The destruction of the temple (52:17–23)
  - The fate of certain people (52:24–34)
  - The fate of those in the city during its fall (52:24–27)
  - The fate of the exiles (52:28–30)
  - The fate of Jehoiachin (52:31–34)

LAMENTATIONS

- This book, written by Jeremiah, looks back at the fall of Jerusalem.
- It is a book of mourning.

OUTLINE

- First Dirge: Jerusalem's Desolation (1)
    - *How deserted lies the city, once so full of people! ...Judah has gone into exile. She dwells among the nations… The LORD has brought her grief because of her many sins... When her people fell into enemy hands, there was no one to help her... Jerusalem has sinned greatly and so has become unclean... The enemy laid hands on all her treasures; she saw pagan nations enter her sanctuary… All her people groan as they search for bread; they barter their treasures for food to keep themselves alive...* (1:1–11)
    - *This is why I weep and my eyes overflow with tears. No one is near to comfort me, no one to restore my spirit... The LORD is righteous, yet I rebelled against his command... See, LORD, how distressed I am! I am in torment within, and in my heart, I am disturbed, for I have been most rebellious... May you bring the day you have announced so they may become like me...* (1:12–22)
- Second Dirge: God's Punishment (2)
    - *How the Lord has covered… Zion with the cloud of his anger! ... He has withdrawn his right hand at the approach of the enemy... Like an enemy he has strung his bow; his right hand is ready... Her king and her princes are exiled among the nations, the law is no more, and her prophets no longer find visions from the LORD...* (2:1–10)
    - *My eyes fail from weeping, I am in torment within; my heart is poured out on the ground because my people are destroyed… All who pass your way clap their hands at you; they scoff and shake their heads… The LORD has done what he planned; he has fulfilled his word…* (2:11–19)
- Third Dirge: Jeremiah's Response (3)
    - *I am the man who has seen affliction by the rod of the LORD's wrath. He has driven me away and made me walk in darkness rather than light… He has made… my flesh grow old and has broken my bones... He has made me dwell in darkness like those long dead. He has walled me in so I cannot escape… Even when I call out or cry for help, he shuts out my prayer... Like a bear lying in wait, like a lion in hiding, he dragged me from the path and mangled me… He has broken my teeth with gravel; he has trampled me in the dust... I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me...* (3:1–18)
    - *Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions*

never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion; therefore, I will wait for him." The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD... For no one is cast off by the Lord forever. Though he brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his unfailing love... Let us examine our ways and test them and let us return to the LORD. (3:19–40)

- *Let us lift up our hearts and our hands to God in heaven and say: "We have sinned and rebelled and you have not forgiven… You have made us scum and refuse among the nations… Streams of tears flow from my eyes because my people are destroyed. My eyes will flow unceasingly, without relief, until the LORD looks down from heaven and sees. What I see brings grief to my soul… I called on your name, LORD, from the depths of the pit. You heard my plea… You, Lord, took up my case; you redeemed my life. LORD, you have seen the wrong done to me...* (3:41–66)

- Fourth Dirge: God's Anger (4)
  - *The kings of the earth did not believe, nor did any of the peoples of the world… Now they grope through the streets as if they were blind… The LORD himself has scattered them; he no longer watches over them. The priests are shown no honor, the elders no favor...* (4:12–20)
  - *Your punishment will end, Daughter Zion; he will not prolong your exile. But he will punish your sin, Daughter Edom, and expose your wickedness.* (4:21–22)
- Fifth Dirge: The Remnant's Response (5)
  - *Remember, LORD, what has happened to us; look, and see our disgrace. Our inheritance has been turned over to strangers, our homes to foreigners... we are weary and find no rest. We submitted to Egypt and Assyria… Joy is gone from our hearts; our dancing has turned to mourning... Woe to us, for we have sinned!* (5:1–18)
  - *You, LORD, reign forever; your throne endures from generation to generation... Restore us to yourself, LORD, that we may return…* (5:19–22)

Next week: Ezekiel

Lesson 20

EZEKIEL

- Ezekiel was among the Jews taken captive by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon when King Jehoiachin was captured in 597BC.
- Like Jeremiah, Ezekiel was a priest, as well as a prophet.
- He was thirty years old when he began his prophetic ministry to the Jews in Babylon and continued for about 20 years.

OUTLINE

- Judgment on Judah (chaps. 1–24)
    - Ezekiel's preparation (chaps. 1–3)
        - *In my thirtieth year… while I was among the exiles by the Kebar River, the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God... it was the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin…* (1:1-2)
        - In a vision Ezekiel saw a thunderstorm. Amid the storm a light glowed brightly. In the light he saw four humanoid creatures (identified in chapter 10 as angels) each with four faces and four wings. They were standing upright, and their feet were calf-like. Two of the wings of each creature were outstretched so that their wings touched one another, forming a square. The front of each angel was the face of a man, and on the right side was the face of a lion. On the left was the face of an ox, and the face of an eagle was in the back. Looking below the angels, Ezekiel saw some wheels. Each wheel sparkled with a yellow-green glow. They intersected at right angles and could roll in four directions without being turned. The rims of the wheels were covered with eyes, possibly representing the all-seeing nature of God. Above their wings was a great expanse of shining brilliance. When the angels moved their wings, they made a loud sound like water rushing down a mountain stream. When they stopped Ezekiel became aware of the voice of God seated on the throne. He had the appearance of God's glory (Jesus?).
        - Ezekiel responded in humble submission, falling facedown, as he heard the voice of God speak. (1:4-28)
        - *He said to me, "Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak to you… I am sending you to the Israelites, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me… The people to whom I am sending you are obstinate and stubborn... they will know that a prophet has been among them… do not be afraid of them or their words... You must speak my words to them, whether they listen or fail to listen…" Then I looked, and I saw a hand stretched out to me. In it was a scroll… On both sides of it were written words of lament and mourning and woe. And he said to me, "…eat this*

scroll; then go and speak to the people of Israel." So, I ate it, and it tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth... Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me a loud rumbling sound as the glory of the LORD rose from the place where it was standing... The Spirit then lifted me up and took me away, and I went in bitterness and in the anger of my spirit, with the strong hand of the LORD on me. I came to the exiles who lived at Tel Aviv… And there, where they were living, I sat among them for seven days—deeply distressed. (2:1-3:15)

- Ezekiel's prophecies against Judah and Jerusalem (chaps. 4–24)
  - *He then said to me: "Son of man, I am about to cut off the food supply in Jerusalem. The people will eat rationed food in anxiety and drink rationed water in despair… They will be appalled at the sight of each other and will waste away because of their sin"* (4:16-17).
  - *"Now… take a sharp sword and… shave your head and your beard. Then take a set of scales and divide up the hair... burn a third of the hair… Take a third and strike it with the sword… And scatter a third to the wind... But take a few hairs and tuck them away in the folds of your garment... This is what the Sovereign LORD says: 'This is Jerusalem… She has rejected my laws and has not followed my decrees... I myself am against you, Jerusalem, and I will inflict punishment on you in the sight of the nations... Therefore, in your midst parents will eat their children, and children will eat their parents... I will inflict punishment on you and will scatter all your survivors to the winds... I will not look on you with pity or spare you. A third of your people will die of the plague or perish by famine… a third will fall by the sword… and a third I will scatter to the winds and pursue with drawn sword... You will be a reproach and a taunt, a warning and an object of horror to the nations around you… I the LORD have spoken.'"* (5:1-17)
  - Ezekiel prophesied the departure of God's glory from the Temple in Jerusalem (10)
  - *The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, the people of Jerusalem have said of your fellow exiles and all the other Israelites, 'They are far away from the LORD; this land was given to us as our possession.' Therefore say: 'Although I sent them far away among the nations and scattered them among the countries… I will gather you from the nations and bring you back from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you back the land of Israel again... I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them… They will be my people, and I will be their God... Then the vision I had seen went up from me,*

and I told the exiles everything the LORD had shown me. (11:14-25)
    - Ezekiel prophesied judgement on false prophets and idolaters both among the exiles and in Jerusalem (13-14)
    - *The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, if a country sins against me by being unfaithful and I stretch out my hand against it to cut off its food supply and send famine upon it and kill its people and their animals, even if these three men — Noah, Daniel and Job — were in it, they could save only themselves by their righteousness, declares the Sovereign LORD"* (14:12-14)..
    - God compared Jerusalem to a useless vine and an adulterous wife. (15-16)
    - *The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, with one blow I am about to take away from you the delight of your eyes. Yet do not lament or weep or shed any tears. Groan quietly; do not mourn for the dead…" So, I spoke to the people in the morning, and in the evening my wife died... I did as I had been commanded. Then the people asked me, "Won't you tell us what these things have to do with us? Why are you acting like this?" So, I said to them, "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: 'I am about to desecrate my sanctuary… the delight of your eyes, the object of your affection. The sons and daughters you left behind will fall by the sword... You will not mourn or weep but will waste away because of your sins and groan among yourselves... When this happens, you will know that I am the Sovereign LORD.' "And you, son of man, on the day I take away their stronghold, their joy and glory, the delight of their eyes, their heart's desire, and their sons and daughters as well… a fugitive will come to tell you the news. At that time your mouth will be opened; you will speak with him and will no longer be silent. So, you will be a sign to them, and they will know that I am the LORD."* (24:15-27)
- Judgment on Gentile Nations (chaps. 25–32)
    - Ammon: *"Because you said 'Aha!' over my sanctuary when it was desecrated and over the land of Israel when it was laid waste and over the people of Judah when they went into exile, therefore I am going to give you to the people of the East… Because you have clapped your hands and stamped your feet, rejoicing with all the malice of your heart against the land of Israel, therefore I will stretch out my hand against you and give you as plunder to the nations. I will wipe you out from among the nations and exterminate you from the countries. I will destroy you, and you will know that I am the LORD"* (25:3-7).
    - Moab: *"Because Moab and Seir said, 'Look, Judah has become like all the other nations,' therefore I will expose the flank of Mo-*

ab… I will give Moab along with the Ammonites to the people of the East… I will inflict punishment on Moab. Then they will know that I am the LORD" (25:8-11).

- Edom: *"'Because Edom took revenge on Judah… I will lay it waste… they will know my vengeance,' declares the Sovereign Lord"* (25:12–14).
- Philistia: *"Because the Philistines acted in vengeance and took revenge with malice in their hearts, and with ancient hostility sought to destroy Judah… I am about to stretch out my hand against the Philistines… I will carry out great vengeance on them and punish them in my wrath. Then they will know that I am the Lord…"* (25:15–17)
- Tyre: *"…because Tyre has said of Jerusalem, 'Aha! The gate to the nations is broken, and its doors have swung open to me; now that she lies in ruins I will prosper,' …I am against you, Tyre… From the north I am going to bring against Tyre Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon… with horses and chariots, with horsemen and a great army"* (26:1–28:19)
- Sidon: *"I am against you, Sidon, and among you I will display my glory. You will know that I am the Lord, when I inflict punishment on you… I will send a plague upon you and make blood flow in your streets… Then you will know that I am the Lord"* (28:20–26).
- Egypt: *"I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt, you great monster lying among your streams. You say, 'The Nile belongs to me; I made it for myself.' But I will put hooks in your jaws… I will pull you out from among your streams… I will leave you in the desert, you and all the fish of your streams. You will fall on the open field and not be gathered or picked up. I will give you as food to the beasts of the earth and the birds of the sky"* (chaps. 29–32).

- Blessings on Israel (chaps. 33–48)
  - New life for Israel (chaps. 33–39)
    - *In the twelfth year of our exile, in the tenth month on the fifth day, a man who had escaped from Jerusalem came to me and said, "The city has fallen!"* (33:21).
    - *"Woe to you shepherds of Israel who only take care of yourselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally... My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them... because my shepherds did not search for my flock but cared for themselves rather than for my flock… I am against the*

shepherds and will hold them accountable for my flock. I will remove them from tending the flock... I will rescue my flock from their mouths…" (34:1-10).

- *"…It is not for your sake, people of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. I will show the holiness of my great name… Then the nations will know that I am the Lord… I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land… I will cleanse you from all your impurities… I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees… Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God... On the day I cleanse you from all your sins, I will resettle your towns, and the ruins will be rebuilt... I the Lord have spoken, and I will do it.'* (36:16-36)
- *The hand of the Lord was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" I said, "Sovereign Lord, you alone know." Then he said to me, "Prophesy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! …I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life... Then you will know that I am the Lord.' So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. I looked and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it… breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.' So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army.* (37:1-10)

- New order for Israel (chaps. 40–48)
  - Prophecies about the restored Temple (chaps. 40–43)
  - Prophecies about the restored priesthood and worship (chaps. 44–46)
  - Prophecies about a restored land (chaps. 47–48)

NEXT WEEK: Daniel.

Lesson 21

DANIEL

- In 721BC the Assyrians completed their conquest of Israel (the Northern Kingdom). However, by 612BC Nabopolassar, the king of Babylon attacked Nineveh, the Assyrian capital. By 605BC the Assyrian Empire was completely overrun, and Nebuchadnezzar led the Babylonians against Egypt.
- Upon learning of the death of his father, Nebuchadnezzar returned to Babylon and was crowned king. His first act as king was to attack Jerusalem, at which time Daniel and his companions were taken as captives.
- Nebuchadnezzar returned to Judah a second time in 597BC in response to Jehoiachin's rebellion. He took 10,000 captives back to Babylon, including Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1:1–3; 2 Kings 24:8–20; 2 Chronicles 36:6–10).
- Nebuchadnezzar's final conquest of Jerusalem began in 588BC. The city walls were breached, the city destroyed, and the temple burned in 586BC. Most of the Jews who were not killed in this assault were deported to Babylon (2 Kings 25:1–7; Jer. 34:1–7; 39:1–7; 52:2–11).
- After his arrival in Babylon, along with three other young men most know by their Babylonian names: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Daniel rose to the office of prime minister. Despite intense political pressure, he lived a model life of integrity and obedience to God. Because of Daniel's faithfulness, God blessed him with wisdom, the ability to interpret dreams, and symbolic prophecies about the future.
- Daniel is one of the few men about whom God says only good things. Three times he is referred to as "the greatly beloved" one (Daniel 9:23, 10:11, 19). The name Daniel means "God is Judge."
- While included with the prophetic books of the Old Testament, Daniel is apocryphal literature much like the New Testament Book of Revelation. The word apocalypse means "an unveiling of the secret purposes of God."
- Daniel is unique in that he is a Prophet to the Gentiles (Luke 21:24).

OUTLINE

- Personal History of Daniel (chap. 1)
    - Deported to Babylon. *In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God... the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring into the king's service some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility — young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians. The king assigned them a daily amount of food and*

wine from the king's table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king's service. Among those who were chosen were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego. (1:1-7)

- Daniel's devotion to God. *But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way. Now God had caused the official to show favor and compassion to Daniel, but the official told Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you." Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food and treat your servants in accordance with what you see." ...At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. ...To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.* (1:8-17)
- Daniel's appointment. *"At the end of the time set by the king to bring them into his service… The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.* (1:17–21)

- Nebuchadnezzar's dreams (2-4)
  - *In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled, and he could not sleep. So, the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers to tell him what he had dreamed... "This is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble. But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. So, tell me the dream and interpret it for me." ...The astrologers answered the king, "There is no one on earth who can do what the king asks! ... No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among humans." This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon. ... and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death. When Arioch, the commander of the king's guard, had*

gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact. He asked the king's officer, "Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?" Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel. At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him. Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery… During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision... (2:3-23)

- The dream revealed to Daniel. *Then Daniel went to Arioch… "Do not execute the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king, and I will interpret his dream for him." …The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), "Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?" Daniel replied, "No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come... the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen... Your Majesty looked, and there before you stood a large statue… The head of the statue was made of pure gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay. While you were watching, a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were all broken to pieces… The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth... The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory… You are that head of gold. After you, another kingdom will arise, inferior to yours. Next, a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule over the whole earth. Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron… it will crush and break all the others... In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed… This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands… The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future... Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate before Daniel and paid him honor and ordered that an offering and incense be presented to him. The king said to Daniel, "Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery." Then the king placed Daniel in a high position and lavished many gifts on him. He made him ruler over the entire province of Babylon and placed him in charge of all its wise men. Moreover, at Daniel's request the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego administrators over the province of Babylon, while Daniel himself remained at the royal court.* (2:24-49)

NOTE: Many interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream from a premillennial perspective: Daniel's interpretation revealed the course of Gentile kingdoms which would rule over Palestine and the people of Israel. Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire was represented by the head of gold. He received his power and glory from God. He was viewed as a "king of kings," as his empire included the entire known world. The chest and arms of silver represented the rise of the Medes and Persians who conquered Babylon in 539 B.C. The arms represent the two nations that together defeated Babylon. Though they lasted much longer than the Babylonians they were inferior to them. The belly and thighs of bronze represented the Greek Empire and Alexander the Great who conquered the Medo-Persians about 330 B.C. The legs of iron represented the Roman Empire which was stronger than any of the previous empires. The Romans began as iron but to clay mixed with iron. Though they conquered vast territories were never united. The whole statue was finally destroyed by a rock. In Scripture a rock often refers to Jesus Christ (Psalm 118:22; Isaiah 8:14; 28:16; 1 Peter 2:6–8 for example). God himself empowered Nebuchadnezzar and would then transfer to Medo-Persia, then to Greece, and ultimately to Rome, before the arrival of a King who will rule over the earth, subduing it to His authority (Jesus). So, the four empires that ruled over Israel would not be destroyed by human means, but by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the rock. Then He will rule forever in the Millennium and in the eternal state. Therefore, Nebuchadnezzar's dream certainly seems to teach premillennialism — that Christ will return to earth to establish His rule on the earth, subduing all nations.

- Nebuchadnezzar's image. (3)
  - *King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, sixty cubits high and six cubits wide* (90' tall x 9' wide)*, and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. He then summoned the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the image he had set up. So, the [officials] …assembled for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and they stood before it. Then the herald loudly proclaimed, "Nations and peoples of every language, this is what you are commanded to do: As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace." Therefore, as soon as they heard the sound… all the nations and peoples of every language fell down and worshiped the image…* (3:1–7)
  - The accusation against the Jews. *At this time some astrologers came forward and denounced the Jews. They said to King Nebu-*

chadnezzar, "…there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon — Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego — who pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up." Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego... "Is it true… that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? Now when you hear the sound… if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?" Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, "King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up." (3:8–18)

- Deliverance by God. *...Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace... The king's command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace. Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire? …Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods." Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!" So, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, and the [officials] …crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them. Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. Therefore, I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way." Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the province of Babylon.* (3:19–30)

- Nebuchadnezzar's second dream (chap. 4)
  *This is about 30 years after the fiery furnace.
    - *I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at home in my palace… As I was lying in bed, the images and visions that passed through my mind terrified me. So, I commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be brought before me to interpret the dream for me… I told them the dream, but they could not interpret it for me. Finally, Daniel came into my presence, and I told him the dream... I looked, and there before me stood a tree in the middle of the land. Its height was enormous. The tree grew large and strong, and its top touched the sky; it was visible to the ends of the earth. Its leaves were beautiful, its fruit abundant, and on it was food for all. Under it the wild animals found shelter, and the birds lived in its branches; from it every creature was fed... I looked, and there before me was a holy one, a messenger, coming down from heaven. He called in a loud voice: 'Cut down the tree and trim off its branches; strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit... But let the stump and its roots, bound with iron and bronze, remain in the ground… and let him live with the animals… Let his mind be changed from that of a man and let him be given the mind of an animal, till seven times pass by for him... This is the dream that I, King Nebuchadnezzar, had...* (4:1–18)
    - Daniel's interpretation. *Then Daniel (also called Belteshazzar) was greatly perplexed for a time, and his thoughts terrified him. So, the king said, "Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its meaning alarm you." Belteshazzar answered… "My lord, if only the dream applied to your enemies… The tree you saw… Your Majesty, you are that tree! You have become great and strong… and your dominion extends to distant parts of the earth. Your Majesty saw a holy one, a messenger, coming down from heaven and saying, 'Cut down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump…' This is the interpretation, Your Majesty… You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like the ox and be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms… The command to leave the stump of the tree with its roots means that your kingdom will be restored to you when you acknowledge that Heaven rules. Therefore, Your Majesty, be pleased to accept my advice: Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue."* (4:19–27)
    - *All this happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. ...He was driven away from people and ate grass like the ox. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird. At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity*

was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever... his kingdom endures from generation to generation... At the same time that my sanity was restored, my honor and splendor were returned to me… I was restored to my throne and became even greater than before. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble. (4:28–37)

- Belshazzar (5).
  NOTE: While Daniel 1–4 cover the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, who expanded the Babylonian Empire and ruled 43 years. He died in 562 BC. He was succeeded by his son Evil-Merodach who ruled from 562–560 BC (2 Kings 25:27–30; Jer. 52:31–34). He was assassinated by his brother-in-law, Neriglissar who ruled from 560–556 BC. He called Nergal-Sharezer in Jeremiah 39:3, 13. Neriglissar was succeeded by his son, Labashi-Marduk, who ruled only two months in 556BC. He was assassinated and usurped by Nabonidus, who reigned from 556–539 BC. During that time he appointed his son, Belshazzar as his coregent, which explains why Belshazzar was called king and exercised kingly authority even though Nabonidus actually held the throne.
  - The handwriting on the wall. *King Belshazzar gave a great banquet for a thousand of his nobles… he gave orders to bring in the gold and silver goblets that Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken from the temple in Jerusalem… and the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines drank from them. As they drank… they praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone. Suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall… The king watched the hand as it wrote. His face turned pale, and he was so frightened that his legs became weak and his knees were knocking... The king summoned the enchanters, astrologers and diviners… "Whoever reads this writing and tells me what it means will be clothed in purple and have a gold chain placed around his neck, and he will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom." …but they could not read the writing or tell the king what it meant... The queen, hearing the voices of the king and his nobles, came into the banquet hall. "… There is a man in your kingdom who has the spirit of the holy gods in him. In the time of your father, he was found to have insight and intelligence and wisdom like that of the gods... King Nebuchadnezzar appointed him chief of the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners... Call for Daniel, and he will tell you what the writing means."* (5:1–12)
  - Daniel interprets the writing. *So, Daniel was brought before the king… Daniel answered the king, "You may keep your gifts for yourself and give your rewards to someone else. Nevertheless, I will read the writing for the king and tell him what it means… the Most High God gave your father Nebuchadnezzar sovereignty and*

greatness… all the nations and peoples of every language dreaded and feared him… But when his heart became arrogant and hardened with pride, he was deposed from his royal throne and stripped of his glory. He was driven away from people and given the mind of an animal… he lived with the wild donkeys and ate grass like the ox; and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven, until he acknowledged that the Most High God is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth… But you, Belshazzar, his son, have not humbled yourself, though you knew all this. …You had the goblets from his temple brought to you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines drank wine from them. You praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone… you did not honor the God who holds in his hand your life and all your ways. Therefore, he sent the hand that wrote the inscription. This is the inscription that was written: 'MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN' Here is what these words mean: …God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end... You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting... Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians..." Then at Belshazzar's command, Daniel was clothed in purple, a gold chain was placed around his neck, and he was proclaimed the third highest ruler in the kingdom. That very night Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians, was slain, and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom, at the age of sixty-two. (5:5–28)

- The edict of Darius (chap. 6)
    - The prominence of Daniel. *It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel... Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom.* (6:1–3)
    - The plot of the other leaders. *At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel… but they were unable to do so... So, these administrators and satraps went as a group to the king and said: "…The royal administrators, prefects, satraps, advisers and governors have all agreed that the king should issue an edict and enforce the decree that anyone who prays to any god or human being during the next thirty days, except to you, Your Majesty, shall be thrown into the lions' den… issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be altered — in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed." So, King Darius put the decree in writing.* (6:4–9)
    - The Lion's Den. *Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had*

done before. Then these men went as a group and found Daniel praying and asking God for help. So, they went to the king and spoke to him about his royal decree: "…Daniel, who is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, Your Majesty, or to the decree you put in writing. He still prays three times a day... Remember, Your Majesty, that according to the law of the Medes and Persians no decree or edict that the king issues can be changed." So, the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions' den. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!" A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the rings of his nobles… Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night without eating… And he could not sleep. At the first light of dawn, the king got up and hurried to the lions' den. When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, "Daniel… has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions?" Daniel answered, "…My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, Your Majesty." The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den... At the king's command, the men who had falsely accused Daniel were brought in and thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. And before they reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones. (6:10–24)

- *So, Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian.* (6:28)

- Daniel's apocalyptic visions (chap. 7-12)
  *Notice how the writing shifts from third person to first person. It is likely Daniel wrote these chapters with his own hand.
  - The four beasts.
    - *In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream, and visions passed through his mind as he was lying in bed... "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea. Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea. The first was like a lion, and it had the wings of an eagle. I watched until its wings were torn off and it was lifted from the ground so that it stood on two feet like a human being, and the mind of a human was given to it. And there before me was a second beast, which looked like a bear. It was raised up on one of its sides, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, 'Get up and eat your fill of flesh!' After that, I looked, and there before me was another beast, one that looked like a leopard. And on its back, it had four wings like those of a*

bird. This beast had four heads, and it was given authority to rule. After that… there before me was a fourth beast — terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns. While I was thinking about the horns, there before me was another horn, a little one, which came up among them; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like the eyes of a human being and a mouth that spoke boastfully. As I looked, thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened. …I continued to watch because of the boastful words the horn was speaking. I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire. (The other beasts had been stripped of their authority but were allowed to live for a period of time.) …I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. (7:1–14)

- The interpretation *"I approached one of those standing there and asked him the meaning of all this. So, he told me and gave me the interpretation of these things: 'The four great beasts are four kings that will rise from the earth. But the holy people of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever… Then I wanted to know the meaning of the fourth beast… 'The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it. The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. He will speak against the Most High and oppress his holy people and try to change the set times and the laws. The holy people will be delivered into his hands for a time, times and half a time. …and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of all the kingdoms under*

heaven will be handed over to the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.' This is the end of the matter. I, Daniel, was deeply troubled by my thoughts… but I kept the matter to myself." (7:15–28)

- Daniel was told the four beasts represented four kingdoms.
  - The lion and eagle were both symbols of Babylon (cf. Jer. 4:7, 13; Ezek. 17:3) and probably represent that kingdom.
  - The bear probably represents the Medes and Persians, a large and powerful kingdom who conquered the Babylonians along with Egypt, Assyria. The three ribs may represent those three kingdoms.
  - The leopard with four wings probably represents the Greeks who conquered Medo-Persia with tremendous speed under Alexander the Great between 334-330BC. The four wings may represent the four kingdoms into which Greece was divided after Alexander died.
  - The fourth beast has probably not yet come into existence. It will be extremely powerful and destructive, crushing all others while being ruled by 10 kings. The small horn may represent the Anti-Christ himself.

- The vision of the ram and the goat (chap. 8)
  - The vision. *"In the third year of King Belshazzar's reign, I, Daniel, had a vision… I saw myself in the citadel of Susa in the province of Elam; in the vision I was beside the Ulai Canal. I looked up, and there before me was a ram with two horns, standing beside the canal, and the horns were long. One of the horns was longer than the other but grew up later. I watched the ram as it charged toward the west and the north and the south. No animal could stand against it, and none could rescue from its power. It did as it pleased and became great. As I was thinking about this, suddenly a goat with a prominent horn between its eyes came from the west, crossing the whole earth without touching the ground. It came toward the two-horned ram… and charged at it in great rage... The ram was powerless to stand against it… The goat became very great, but at the height of its power the large horn was broken off, and in its place four prominent horns grew up toward the four winds of heaven. Out of one of them came another horn, which started small but grew in power to the south and to the east and toward the Beautiful Land. It grew until it reached the host of the heavens, and it threw some of the starry host down to the earth and trampled on them. It set itself up to be as great as the*

commander of the army of the LORD; it took away the daily sacrifice from the LORD, and his sanctuary was thrown down. Because of rebellion, the LORD's people and the daily sacrifice were given over to it. It prospered in everything it did, and truth was thrown to the ground. Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to him, "How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled… He said to me, "It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated." (8:1–14)

- The interpretation. *While I, Daniel, was watching the vision and trying to understand it, there before me stood one who looked like a man. And I heard a man's voice from the Ulai calling, "Gabriel, tell this man the meaning of the vision." As he came near the place where I was standing, I was terrified and fell prostrate. "Son of man," he said to me, "understand that the vision concerns the time of the end... I am going to tell you what will happen later in the time of wrath, because the vision concerns the appointed time of the end. The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia. The shaggy goat is the king of Greece, and the large horn between its eyes is the first king. The four horns that replaced the one that was broken off represent four kingdoms that will emerge from his nation but will not have the same power. In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a fierce-looking king, a master of intrigue, will arise. He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy those who are mighty, the holy people. He will cause deceit to prosper, and he will consider himself superior. When they feel secure, he will destroy many and take his stand against the Prince of princes. Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power. The vision of the evenings and mornings that has been given you is true, but seal up the vision, for it concerns the distant future."* (8:15–27)
- Gabriel was sent to interpret Daniel's vision. The ram represented the Medo-Persians, and the goat represented Greece. The cunning ruler is probably King Antiochus of Greece, a ruthless king who murdered his brother and overran Israel to create a buffer between Greece and Rome. During the conquest he prevented the Jews from practicing their religion and built pagan altars in Jerusalem.
- Many scholars consider Antiochus to have dual meaning and a foreshadowing of the Anti-Christ:
    - He will achieve great power by subduing others.
    - He will rise to power by promising false security.

        - He will be intelligent and persuasive.
        - He will be controlled by another, that is, satan himself.
        - He will be an adversary of Israel and subjugate them to his authority.
        - He will rise up in opposition to the Prince of princes, the Lord Jesus Christ.
        - His rule will be terminated by divine judgment.
- The vision of the 70 "sevens" (9)
    - *While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the LORD… Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me… He instructed me and said to me, "Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding... Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy Place. Know and understand this: From the time the word goes out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty -two 'sevens.' …After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be put to death and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."* (9:20-27)
    - **We must tread lightly in our interpretation of this passage!** Daniel was told God's program would be consummated in 70 "sevens." Daniel's people thought in terms of sevens. Seven days are in one week, every seventh year was a sabbath year (Lev. 25:1–7), seven "sevens" brought them to the Year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:8–12). Therefore, seventy "sevens," is 490 years. This prophecy may not be concerned with world history or church history, but with the history of Israel and the city of Jerusalem. By the time these 490 years are completed six things will happen for Israel:
        - God will finish the transgression of Israel as she repents and turns to Christ as Messiah and Savior. Then Israel will be restored to the land and blessed.
        - God will put an end to sin. Israel's sin would be punished in Christ and removed at his second coming he

will remove Israel's sin (Ezekiel 37:23; Romans 11:20–27).
    - God will atone for wickedness. This too relates to God's final atonement of Israel when she repents at Christ's second coming.
    - Being satisfied by the death of Christ, God will bring in everlasting righteousness. That is God will establish an age characterized by righteousness (Isaiah 60:21; Jeremiah 23:5–6).
    - God will seal up vision and prophecy. All that God through the prophets said He would do in fulfilling His covenant with Israel will be fully realized in the millennial kingdom.
    - God will anoint the most holy. This may refer to the dedication of the Most Holy place in the temple (Ezekiel 41–46), or it may refer to the enthronement of Christ, "the Anointed One" (Dan. 7:25–27) as King of kings and Lord of lords in the Millennium.
- The 70 "sevens" would begin, Gabriel said, with the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. King Cyrus issued a decree in 538 BC (2 Chron. 36:22–23; Ezra 1:1–4; 5:13). A second decree was given by the decree of Darius in 520 BC (Ezra 6:1, 6–12). A third decree was given by Artaxerxes 457 BC (Ezra 7:11–26). The first two decrees pertain to the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem and the third relates to finances for animal sacrifices at the temple. None of the three anything about rebuilding the city itself. Therefore, none was the decree that signaled the beginning of the 70 sevens. However, a fourth decree was given by Artaxerxes in 444 BC (Nehemiah 2:1–8). He granted the Jews permission to rebuild Jerusalem's walls. Therefore, this fourth decree could be the one referred to in Daniel 9:25.
    - This 490-year period is divided into three segments: 7 "sevens" (49 years), 62 "sevens" (434 years), and 1 "seven" (7 years). The first period of 49 years may refer to the rebuilding of Jerusalem under Nehemiah. While wall construction took only 52 days, many years may have been needed to remove the city's debris (after being desolate for many decades), to build adequate housing, and to rebuild the streets.
    - The 62 "sevens" (434 years) extend up to the introduction of the Messiah concluding with the Triumphal Entry just before Christ was cut off in crucifixion. During His Triumphal Entry, Jesus, in fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9, officially presented Himself as Messiah. *"If you, even you, had only known on*

this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes" (Luke 19:42).
        - It would seem that there is an interval between the first two "sevens," and the third one. Daniel's prophecies leave room for this interval, especially since Jesus prophesied, *"Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes'? Therefore, I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed."* (Matthew 21:42-44). In other words, it is not yet time for the third "seven."
        - Verse 27 reveals what will occur in the third of the "sevens." This seven-year period will begin after the Rapture of the church and conclude with the return of Jesus Christ to the earth. Jesus said, *"For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again"* (Matthew 24:21). This period is often called the Tribulation.
    - Daniel's final vision (chaps. 10–12)
        - Additional prophecies concerning Israel among the Persians (10:1–11:35).
        - Exiles had returned from Babylon by this time and had begun rebuilding the temple. Daniel had not returned with them because of his age. Although the captivity was over and Jerusalem was being reoccupied, the vision given to Daniel shattered any hope of Israel enjoying freedom and peace for long.
        - The succession of rulers in chapter 11 is seen in the history of the divided kingdoms after the death of Alexander the Great and before the rise of the Roman Empire.
        - The Anti-Christ is seen again in 11:36–45.
- Daniel is given leave. *I asked, "My lord, what will the outcome of all this be?" He replied, "Go your way, Daniel, because the words are rolled up and sealed until the time of the end. Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand… As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance."* (12:8-13)

NEXT WEEK: Hosea, Joel, and Amos

Lesson 22

HOSEA

- Both Hosea and Amos were prophets to the Northern Kingdom of Israel.
- Though his main target was the Northern Kingdom, his message encompassed the entire people of God.
- 2 Kings 15–17 covers the period of Hosea and records the terrible sins of idol worship and unbridled adultery.
- While Hosea, his marriage, and his life as recorded in this book were real, they also became a metaphor of the nation of Israel.

OUTLINE

- Hosea's Times. *The word of the LORD that came to Hosea, son of Beeri during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and during the reign of Jeroboam son of Jehoash king of Israel* (1:1).
- Hosea's Experience. (1:2–3:5)
    - Hosea's marriage: Israel's unfaithfulness. *When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, "Go, marry a promiscuous woman and have children with her, for like an adulterous wife this land is guilty of unfaithfulness to the LORD." So he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim…* (1:2–3a)
    - Hosea's children: Israel's judgment.
        - *…she conceived and bore him a son. Then the LORD said to Hosea, "Call him Jezreel, because I will soon punish the house of Jehu for the massacre at Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of Israel.* (1:3b-5)
        - *Gomer conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. Then the LORD said to Hosea, "Call her Lo-Ruhamah (which means "not loved"), for I will no longer show love to Israel, that I should at all forgive them. Yet I will show love to Judah; and I will save them—not by bow, sword or battle, or by horses and horsemen, but I, the LORD their God, will save them."* (1:6-7)
        - *Gomer had another son. Then the LORD said, "Call him Lo-Ammi (which means "not my people"), for you are not my people, and I am not your God… In the place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' they will be called 'children of the living God.' The people of Judah and the people of Israel will come together; they will appoint one leader and will come up out of the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel.* (1:8-11)
    - A prophecy of judgement and restoration. (2)
    - The restoration of Hosea's marriage. *The Lord said to me, "Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another man and is an adulteress. Love her as the Lord loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes." So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and about a*

homer and a lethek of barley. Then I told her, "You are to live with me many days; you must not be a prostitute or be intimate with any man, and I will behave the same way toward you." (3:1-3)

- Hosea's Message: God's Judgment and Restoration of Israel. (4–14)
  - Judgement.
    - *Hear the word of the LORD, you Israelites, because the LORD has a charge to bring against you who live in the land: "There is no faithfulness, no love, no acknowledgment of God in the land. There is only cursing, lying and murder, stealing and adultery; they break all bounds, and bloodshed follows bloodshed.* (4:1-2)
    - *My people consult a wooden idol, and a diviner's rod speaks to them. A spirit of prostitution leads them astray; they are unfaithful to their God.* (4:12)
    - *Hear this, you priests! Pay attention, you Israelites! Listen, royal house! This judgment is against you…* (5:1)
    - Although Israel and Ephraim (Northern Kingdom) are frequently mentioned, Judah is not exempt. "Also for you, Judah, a harvest is appointed. (6:11)
    - *My God will reject them because they have not obeyed him; they will be wanderers among the nations.* (9:17)
    - *When I please, I will punish them; nations will be gathered against them to put them in bonds for their double sin.* (10:10)
    - *When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. But the more they were called, the more they went away from me. They sacrificed to the Baals and they burned incense to images... I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love. To them I was like one who lifts a little child to the cheek, and I bent down to feed them.* (11:1-4)
  - Restoration.
    - *Return, Israel, to the LORD your God. Your sins have been your downfall! Take words with you and return to the LORD. Say to him: "Forgive all our sins… Assyria cannot save us… We will never again say 'Our gods' to what our own hands have made, for in you the fatherless find compassion."* (14:1-3)
    - *"I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them... Who is wise? Let them realize these things. Who is discerning? Let them understand. The ways of the LORD are right; the righteous walk in them, but the rebellious stumble in them.* (14:4-9)

JOEL

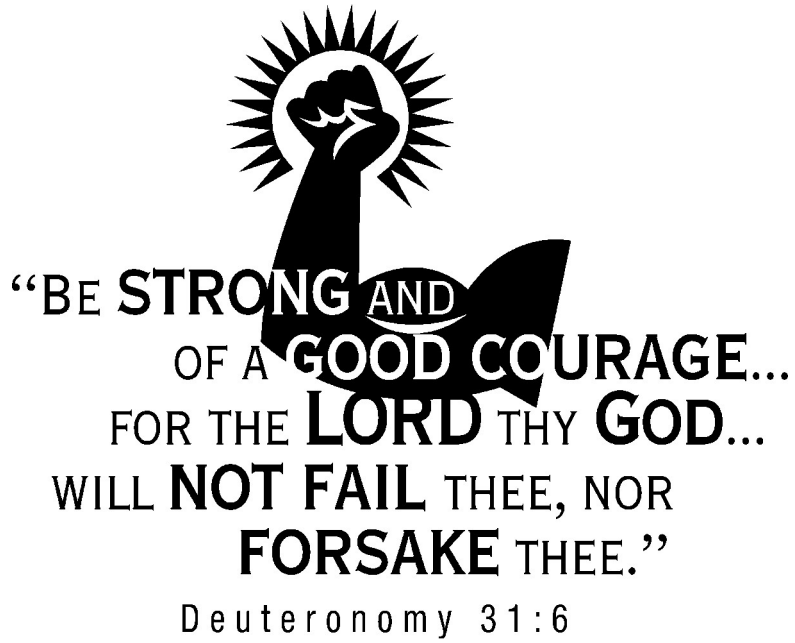
- Joel was a prophet to Judah.
- Because no information is given, scholars believe this book was written sometime between 900-100BC, probably after the Babylonian Exile began.
- This book presents some difficulties with interpretation that force us to simply learn what we can and accept it as written.

OUTLINE

- The Locust Plague. (1:2–20)
    - *Hear this, you elders; listen, all who live in the land. Has anything like this ever happened in your days or in the days of your ancestors? Tell it to your children, and let your children tell it to their children… What the locust swarm has left the great locusts have eaten; what the great locusts have left the young locusts have eaten; what the young locusts have left other locusts have eaten.* (1:2-4)
    - *A nation has invaded my land, a mighty army without number; it has the teeth of a lion, the fangs of a lioness.* (1:6)
    - *Grain offerings and drink offerings are cut off from the house of the LORD. The priests are in mourning, those who minister before the LORD.* (1:9)
- The coming Day of the Lord (2)
    - *…Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming. It is close at hand — a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness. Like dawn spreading across the mountains a large and mighty army comes, such as never was in ancient times nor ever will be in ages to come.* (2:1-2)
    - *At the sight of them, nations are in anguish; every face turns pale. They charge like warriors; they scale walls like soldiers. They all march in line, not swerving from their course. They do not jostle each other; each marches straight ahead. They plunge through defenses without breaking ranks.* (2:6-8)
    - *Before them the earth shakes, the heavens tremble, the sun and moon are darkened, and the stars no longer shine. The LORD thunders at the head of his army; his forces are beyond number, and mighty is the army that obeys his command. The day of the LORD is great; it is dreadful. Who can endure it?* (2:10-11)
- A call to repentance. (2)
    - *"Even now," declares the LORD, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning."* (2:12)
    - *Gather the people, consecrate the assembly; bring together the elders, gather the children… Let the priests, who minister before the LORD, weep between the portico and the altar. Let them say,*

"Spare your people, LORD. Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn… Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?' (2:16-17)

- Forgiveness and restoration. (2)
  - *Then the LORD was jealous for his land and took pity on his people.* (2:18)
  - *"I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten — the great locust and the young locust, the other locusts and the locust swarm — my great army that I sent among you. You will have plenty to eat, until you are full, and you will praise the name of the LORD your God, who has worked wonders for you; never again will my people be shamed. Then you will know that I am in Israel, that I am the LORD your God, and that there is no other…"* (2:25-27)
- Promise of a Glorious Future (2:28–3:21)
  - *"And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days."* (2:28–29)
  - *And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved…* (2:32)
  - *"In those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will put them on trial for what they did to my inheritance, my people Israel, because they scattered my people among the nations and divided up my land."* (3:1-2)



AMOS

* Amos was a shepherd, one of the few prophets who was not a priest.
* He prophesied in Israel (the Northern Kingdom) during the height of its prosperity. He ministered at the same time as Hosea, during the reign of Uzziah, King of Judah, and Jeroboam, King of Israel.

OUTLINE

- Prologue. *The words of Amos, one of the shepherds of Tekoa—the vision he saw concerning Israel two years before the earthquake, when Uzziah was king of Judah and Jeroboam son of Jehoash was king of Israel.* (1:1)
- Judgments. (1:3–2:16)
    - Judgment against Damascus. (1:3–5)
    - Judgment against Gaza. (1:6–8)
    - Judgment against Tyre. (1:9–10)
    - Judgment against Edom. (1:11–12)
    - Judgment against Ammon. (1:13–15)
    - Judgment against Moab. (2:1–3)
    - Judgment against Judah. *This is what the Lord says: "For three sins of Judah, even for four, I will not relent. Because they have rejected the law of the Lord and have not kept his decrees, because they have been led astray by false gods, the gods their ancestors followed, I will send fire on Judah that will consume the fortresses of Jerusalem."* (2:4-5)
    - Judgment against Israel. (2:6–16)
        - The broken covenant. *This is what the Lord says: "For three sins of Israel, even for four, I will not relent. They sell the innocent for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals. They trample on the heads of the poor… and deny justice to the oppressed. Father and son use the same girl and so profane my holy name. They lie down beside every altar on garments taken in pledge. In the house of their god, they drink wine taken as fines.* (2:6–8)
        - The spurned grace. *"I brought you up out of Egypt and led you forty years in the wilderness to give you the land of the Amorites. "I also raised up prophets from among your children and Nazirites from among your youths... But you made the Nazirites drink wine and commanded the prophets not to prophesy."* (2:10–12)
        - The resulting judgment. *"Now then, I will crush you… The swift will not escape, the strong will not muster their strength, and the warrior will not save his life. The archer will not stand his ground, the fleet-footed soldier will not get away, and the horseman will not save his life. Even the bravest warriors will flee naked on that day," declares the Lord.* (2:13–16)

- Reasons for and a description of judgment. (chaps. 3–6)
    - *Hear this word, people of Israel, the word the LORD has spoken against you — against the whole family I brought up out of Egypt: "You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth; therefore, I will punish you for all your sins."* (3:1-2)
    - *Therefore, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: "An enemy will overrun your land, pull down your strongholds and plunder your fortresses."* (3:11)
    - *"Therefore, this is what I will do to you, Israel, and because I will do this to you, Israel, prepare to meet your God."* (4:12)
    - *This is what the LORD says to Israel: "Seek me and live…"* (5:4)
    - *There are those who turn justice into bitterness and cast righteousness to the ground... There are those who hate the one who upholds justice in court and detest the one who tells the truth. You levy a straw tax on the poor and impose a tax on their grain. Therefore, though you have built stone mansions, you will not live in them; though you have planted lush vineyards, you will not drink their wine. For I know how many are your offenses and how great your sins. There are those who oppress the innocent and take bribes and deprive the poor of justice in the courts. Therefore, the prudent keep quiet in such times, for the times are evil."* (5:7-13)
    - *Seek good, not evil, that you may live. Then the LORD God Almighty will be with you, just as you say he is. Hate evil, love good; maintain justice in the courts. Perhaps the LORD God Almighty will have mercy…* (5:14-15)
    - *"I hate, I despise your religious festivals; your assemblies are a stench to me. Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them. Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps. But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream! …You have lifted up the shrine of your king, the pedestal of your idols… Therefore, I will send you into exile beyond Damascus," says the LORD, whose name is God Almighty.* (5:21-27)
    - *Woe to you who are complacent in Zion, and to you who feel secure on Mount Samaria, you notable men of the foremost nation, to whom the people of Israel come! …You lie on beds adorned with ivory and lounge on your couches. You dine on choice lambs and fattened calves. You strum away on your harps like David and improvise on musical instruments. You drink wine by the bowlful and use the finest lotions, but you do not grieve over the ruin of Joseph. Therefore, you will be among the first to go into exile; your feasting and lounging will end.* (6:1-7)

- Impending judgement. (7:1–9:10)
    - *This is what the Sovereign LORD showed me: He was preparing swarms of locusts after the king's share had been harvested and just as the late crops were coming up. When they had stripped the land clean, I cried out, "Sovereign LORD, forgive! How can Jacob survive? He is so small!" So, the LORD relented. "This will not happen," the LORD said.* (7:1-3)
    - *This is what the Sovereign LORD showed me: The Sovereign LORD was calling for judgment by fire; it dried up the great deep and devoured the land. Then I cried out, "Sovereign LORD, I beg you, stop! How can Jacob survive? He is so small!" So the LORD relented. "This will not happen either," the Sovereign LORD said.* (7:4-6)
    - *This is what he showed me: The Lord was standing by a wall that had been built true to plumb, with a plumb line in his hand. And the LORD asked me, "What do you see, Amos?" "A plumb line," I replied. Then the Lord said, "Look, I am setting a plumb line among my people Israel; I will spare them no longer. "The high places of Isaac will be destroyed, and the sanctuaries of Israel will be ruined; with my sword I will rise against the house of Jeroboam."* (7:7-9)
    - Amaziah, the Priest.
        - *Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent a message to Jeroboam king of Israel: "Amos is raising a conspiracy against you in the very heart of Israel. The land cannot bear all his words... Then Amaziah said to Amos, "Get out, you seer! Go back to the land of Judah... Don't prophesy anymore at Bethel, because this is the king's sanctuary and the temple of the kingdom."* (7:10-13)
        - *Amos answered Amaziah, "I was neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, but I was a shepherd, and I also took care of sycamore-fig trees. But the LORD took me from tending the flock and said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.' Now then, hear the word of the LORD. You say, 'Do not prophesy against Israel, and stop preaching against the descendants of Isaac.' Therefore this is what the LORD says: 'Your wife will become a prostitute in the city, and your sons and daughters will fall by the sword. Your land will be measured and divided up, and you yourself will die in a pagan country. And Israel will surely go into exile, away from their native land.'"* (7:14-17)
    - The fruit basket. (8)
        - *This is what the Sovereign LORD showed me: a basket of ripe fruit. "What do you see, Amos?" he asked. "A basket of ripe fruit," I answered. Then the LORD said to me, "The time is ripe for my people Israel; I will spare them no longer."* (8:1-2)

        - *"In that day," declares the Sovereign LORD, "the songs in the temple will turn to wailing. Many, many bodies—flung everywhere! Silence!" Hear this, you who trample the needy and do away with the poor of the land… skimping on the measure, boosting the price and cheating with dishonest scales… The LORD has sworn by himself… "I will never forget anything they have done."* (8:3-7)
- The Restoration after Judgment (9:11–15)
    - *"In that day I will restore David's fallen shelter — I will repair its broken walls and restore its ruins — and will rebuild it as it used to be…"* (9:11)
    - *"…and I will bring my people Israel back from exile. They will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit. I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them," says the LORD your God.* (9:14–15)

NEXT WEEK: Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah



Lesson 23

OBADIAH

- Obadiah means "Servant of Jehovah," or "Worshiper of Jehovah."
- He was God's messenger to Edom.
- At least 12 Old Testament men were named Obadiah including an officer in David's army (1 Chron. 12:9), Ahab's servant (1 Kings 18:3), a Levite in the days of Josiah (2 Chron. 34:12), and a leader who returned from the Exile with Ezra (Ezra 8:9).
- While there are at least three different opinions, most scholars believe this book was written about 586BC, soon after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians.
- The animosity between the Edomites and the Israelites traces all the way back to the days of Jacob and Esau (Genesis 25:21–26). A little history:
    - When Esau was hungry, he traded his birthright to Jacob for some red stew. Because of that Esau was also called Edom (Genesis 25:30), which means red.
    - Esau's descendants came to be known as Edomites and lived southeast of the Dead Sea.
    - The Edomites refused to let the Israelites pass through their land when Israel was on the way to the Promised Land (Numbers 20:14–21).
    - Even though God told Israel not to hate Edom since they were related (Deuteronomy 23:7), hostility developed and continued for centuries (Ezekiel 35:5).
    - Saul (1 Samuel 14:47), David (2 Sam. 8:13–14), Joab (1 Kings 11:16), and Solomon (1 Kings 11:17–22) all had problems with the Edomites.
    - During Jehoshaphat's reign Edom joined the Ammonites and the Moabites in an attack against Judah, but the attack ended with the Ammonites and Moabites defeating the Edomites (2 Chronicles 20:1–2, 10–11, 22–26).
    - In 586BC Edom encouraged Babylon to destroy Jerusalem (Psalm 137:7).
    - Around 500BC Nabateans, from northern Arabia drove most of the Edomites out of their country. Those that remained were absorbed by the Nabateans.
    - The expelled Edomites settled in Idumea, the Greek name for southern Judea, and became known as Idumeans.
    - At the time of Christ's birth, Herod the Great, king of Judea, was an Idumean (Edomite).
    - The Idumeans joined the Jews in their rebellion against Rome in 70AD, but were almost obliterated by Titus, the Roman general. Only a few Idumean refugees escaped and the Edomites faded from history.

OUTLINE

*With just one chapter, this is the shortest book in the Old Testament.

- Prophecy of Edom's Destruction (1–9)
    - *The vision of Obadiah. This is what the Sovereign LORD says about Edom — We have heard a message from the LORD: An envoy was sent to the nations to say, "Rise, let us go against her for battle"— "...I will make you small among the nations; you will be utterly despised…* (1-2)
    - *Though you soar like the eagle and make your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down," declares the LORD.* (4)
    - *Your warriors… will be terrified, and everyone in Esau's mountains will be cut down in the slaughter.* (9)
- Edom's Crimes (vv. 10–14)
    - *Because of the violence against your brother Jacob, you will be covered with shame; you will be destroyed forever...* (10)
    - *You should not gloat over your brother in the day of his misfortune, nor rejoice over the people of Judah in the day of their destruction…* (12)
- God's Judgment on Israel's Enemies. *The day of the Lord is near for all nations. As you have done, it will be done to you…* (15)
- God's Blessings on Israel's People (17–21)
    - *But on Mount Zion will be deliverance; it will be holy, and Jacob will possess his inheritance. Jacob will be a fire and Joseph a flame…* (17-18a)
    - *Esau will be stubble, and they will set him on fire and destroy him. There will be no survivors from Esau.* (18b)
    - *The Lord has spoken... This company of Israelite exiles… will possess the land… the exiles from Jerusalem… will possess the towns… And the kingdom will be the Lord's.* (18b-21)

JONAH

- Jonah was a prophet called by God to preach in Nineveh, the capital city of Assyria.
- According to 2 Kings 14:25 Jonah was from Gath-hepher, a village just three miles from Nazareth, the eventual hometown of Jesus.
- He was a contemporary of Hosea and Amos and prophesied during the reign on Jeroboam II (Northern Kingdom, 793–753BC).
- A literal interpretation of the Book of Jonah is imperative. Jonah was a real man who was swallowed by a real fish – probably a sperm whale or a whale shark, both of which have been known to swallow men who were later found alive in their stomachs.

OUTLINE

- The Disobedience of Jonah (1–2)
    - *The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai: "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me."* (1:1–2)
    - *But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port… he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the LORD.* (1:3)
    - The consequences of Jonah's disobedience (1:4–2:10)
        - *Then the LORD sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. All the sailors were afraid… they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship... Then the sailors said to each other, "Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity." ...the lot fell on Jonah... He answered, "I am a Hebrew and I worship the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land." (They knew he was running away from the LORD, because he had already told them so.) …So, they asked him, "What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?" "Pick me up and throw me into the sea," he replied… "I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you." Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not… Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm...* (1:4–16)
        - *Now the LORD provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.* (1:17)
        - *From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the LORD… "In my distress I called to the LORD, and he answered me... You hurled me into the depths… But you, LORD my God, brought my life up from the pit... I remembered you, LORD, and my prayer rose to you… What I have vowed I will make*

good... Salvation comes from the LORD. (2:1-9)
        - *And the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.* (2:10)
- The Obedience of Jonah (chaps. 3–4)
    - *Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time: "Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you."* (3:1-2)
    - *Jonah obeyed the word of the LORD and went to Nineveh.* (1:3a)
    - *Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it. Jonah began by going a day's journey into the city, proclaiming, "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown." The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth. When Jonah's warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. "...Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish."* (3:3b-9)
    - *When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.* (3:10)
- Jonah's anger (4)
    - *But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry. "...I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity… take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live."* (4:1-3)
    - *But the LORD replied, "Is it right for you to be angry?"* (4:4)
    - *Jonah had gone out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. Then the LORD God provided a leafy plant and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the plant. But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the plant so that it withered. When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "It would be better for me to die than to live."* (4:4-8)
    - *But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?"* (4:9a)
    - *"It is," he said. "And I'm so angry I wish I were dead." But the LORD said, "You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people… and also many animals?"* (4:9b–10)

MICAH

- The Book Micah is usually quoted at Christmas because he prophesied about the birth of Christ. *"'But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."* (5:2)
- Micah was a farmer. His name means, "Who is like Jehovah?" He was a prophet to Judah (the Southern Kingdom), though he often included Israel (the Northern Kingdom).
- He prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah.

OUTLINE

- Micah's first message. (1–2)
    - Introduction. *The word of the LORD that came to Micah… during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah — the vision he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.* (1:1)
    - Coming judgment. *Look! The LORD is coming from his dwelling place… because of Jacob's transgression, because of the sins of the people of Israel. What is Jacob's transgression? Is it not Samaria? What is Judah's high place? Is it not Jerusalem? Therefore, I will make Samaria a heap of rubble… All her idols will be broken to pieces…"* (1:2–7)
    - Lament. *Because of this I will weep and wail… For Samaria's plague is incurable; it has spread to Judah. It has reached… even to Jerusalem itself... disaster has come from the LORD, even to the gate of Jerusalem...* (1:8–16)
    - Sins of Judah (2:1–11)
        - Sins of the people. *Woe to those who plan iniquity… At morning's light they carry it out because it is in their power to do it. They covet fields and seize them, and houses, and take them. They defraud people of their homes; they rob them of their inheritance. Therefore, the LORD says: "I am planning disaster against this people, from which you cannot save yourselves...* (2:1–5)
        - Sins of the false prophets. *"Do not prophesy," their prophets say. "Do not prophesy about these things; disgrace will not overtake us." …You strip off the rich robe from those who pass by without a care… You drive the women of my people from their pleasant homes. You take away my blessing from their children forever... If a liar and deceiver comes and says, 'I will prophesy for you plenty of wine and beer,' that would be just the prophet for this people!* (2:6–11)
    - Deliverance promised. *I will surely gather all of you, Jacob; I will surely bring together the remnant of Israel... The One who breaks open the way will go up before them; they will break through the*

gate and go out. Their King will pass through before them, the LORD at their head." (2:12–13)

- Micah's second message. (3–5)
  - Judgment on the nation's leaders (chap. 3)
    - *Then I said, "Listen, you leaders of Jacob, you rulers of Israel. Should you not embrace justice, you who hate good and love evil...?" Then they will cry out to the LORD, but he will not answer them... he will hide his face from them because of the evil they have done.* (3:1–4)
    - *This is what the LORD says: "As for the prophets who lead my people astray, they proclaim 'peace' if they have something to eat, but prepare to wage war against anyone who refuses to feed them. Therefore, night will come over you… The sun will set for the prophets… The seers will be ashamed, and the diviners disgraced…* (3:5–8)
    - *Hear this… you rulers of Israel, who despise justice and distort all that is right… leaders judge for a bribe… priests teach for a price… her prophets tell fortunes for money… because of you, Zion will be plowed like a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble, the temple hill a mound overgrown with thickets.* (3:9–12)
  - Kingdom blessings for the nation (chaps. 4–5)
    - *In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and peoples will stream to it.* (4:1)
    - *"In that day," declares the LORD, "I will gather the lame; I will assemble the exiles… I will make the lame my remnant, those driven away a strong nation. The LORD will rule over them in Mount Zion from that day and forever.* (4:6-7)
    - *"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times." Therefore, Israel will be abandoned until the time when she who is in labor bears a son, and the rest of his brothers return to join the Israelites. He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth.* (5:2–15)
- Micha's third message. (6–7)
  - *"Hear, you mountains, the LORD's accusation; listen, you everlasting foundations of the earth. For the LORD has a case against his people; he is lodging a charge against Israel.* (6:2)
  - *Am I still to forget your ill-gotten treasures, you wicked house… Shall I acquit someone with dishonest scales, with a bag of false weights? Your rich people are violent; your inhabitants are liars*

and their tongues speak deceitfully. Therefore, I have begun to destroy you, to ruin you because of your sins. (6:6–8)

- Micah pleads with the Lord (7)
    - *What misery is mine! …The faithful have been swept from the land; not one upright person remains. Everyone lies in wait to shed blood… Both hands are skilled in doing evil; the ruler demands gifts, the judge accepts bribes, the powerful dictate what they desire — they all conspire together... The day God visits you has come… Now is the time of your confusion. Do not trust a neighbor; put no confidence in a friend... a man's enemies are the members of his own household.* (7:1–6)
    - *But as for me, I watch in hope for the LORD, I wait for God my Savior; my God will hear me. Do not gloat over me, my enemy! Though I have fallen, I will rise. Though I sit in darkness, the LORD will be my light. Because I have sinned against him, I will bear the LORD's wrath, until he pleads my case and upholds my cause. He will bring me out into the light; I will see his righteousness...* (7:7–13)
    - *Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy. You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea. You will be faithful to Jacob, and show love to Abraham, as you pledged on oath to our ancestors in days long ago.* (7:18–20)

NEXT WEEK: Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah.

Lesson 24

NAHUM

- Nahum prophesied to Judah about one hundred and fifty years after Jonah.
- There is little known about him. Scholars speculate he was from Capernaum.
- His prophecy concerned the destruction of Nineveh, the capital city of Assyria and the ultimate destruction of the Assyrian empire because of their cruelty toward all the nations they conquered.

OUTLINE

- *A prophecy concerning Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.* (1:1)
- The Certainty of God's Judgment on Nineveh (1:2–15)
    - God's wrath. *The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD takes vengeance and is filled with wrath. The LORD takes vengeance on his foes and vents his wrath against his enemies. The LORD is slow to anger but great in power; the LORD will not leave the guilty unpunished. His way is in the whirlwind and the storm, and clouds are the dust of his feet... The mountains quake before him and the hills melt away. The earth trembles at his presence, the world and all who live in it. Who can withstand his indignation? Who can endure his fierce anger? His wrath is poured out like fire; the rocks are shattered before him.* (1:2–6)
    - ***The LORD is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him*, (1:7)**
    - Nineveh's destruction. *...with an overwhelming flood he will make an end of Nineveh… they will be consumed like dry stubble. From you, Nineveh, has one come forth who plots evil against the LORD and devises wicked plans... they will be destroyed and pass away... The Lord has given a command concerning you, Nineveh: "You will have no descendants to bear your name. I will destroy the images and idols that are in the temple of your gods. I will prepare your grave, for you are vile."* (1:8–14)
    - Hope for Judah. *Look, there on the mountains, the feet of one who brings good news, who proclaims peace! Celebrate your festivals, Judah, and fulfill your vows. No more will the wicked invade you; they will be completely destroyed.* (1:12–15)
- Details of God's Judgment on Nineveh (chap. 2)
    - The attack. *An attacker advances against you, Nineveh... The shields of the soldiers are red; the warriors are clad in scarlet... The chariots storm through the streets, rushing back and forth through the squares. They look like flaming torches; they dart about like lightning. Nineveh summons her picked troops, yet they stumble on their way. They dash to the city wall… The river gates are thrown open and the palace collapses.* (2:1–6)

    - The defeat and plundering of Nineveh. *It is decreed that Nineveh be exiled and carried away... She is pillaged, plundered, stripped! Hearts melt, knees give way, bodies tremble, every face grows pale... "I am against you," declares the Lord Almighty. "I will burn up your chariots in smoke… I will leave you no prey on the earth. The voices of your messengers will no longer be heard."* (2:7–13)
- The Reasons for God's Judgment on Nineveh (chap. 3)
    - Nineveh's violence and deceit. *Woe to the city of blood, full of lies, full of plunder, never without victims! The crack of whips, the clatter of wheels, galloping horses and jolting chariots! Charging cavalry, flashing swords and glittering spears! Many casualties, piles of dead, bodies without number, people stumbling over the corpses… "I am against you," declares the Lord Almighty. "…I will treat you with contempt and make you a spectacle..."* (3:1–7)
    - Her treatment of Thebes to result in her own defeat (3:8–11)
    - Nineveh's defenses will be useless. *All your fortresses are like fig trees with their first ripe fruit; when they are shaken, the figs fall into the mouth of the eater. Look at your troops — they are all weaklings. The gates of your land are wide open to your enemies; fire has consumed the bars of your gates... the sword will cut you down — they will devour you like a swarm of locusts... King of Assyria, your shepherds slumber; your nobles lie down to rest. Your people are scattered on the mountains with no one to gather them. Nothing can heal you; your wound is fatal. All who hear the news about you clap their hands at your fall, for who has not felt your endless cruelty?* (3:12–19)



HABAKKUK

- Little is known of Habakkuk the prophet. Rabbinic tradition teaches he was the son of the Shunammite woman raised to life by Elisha (2 Kings 4). Scholars believe he was an officially ordained prophet who took part in temple liturgical singing. He was well educated, deeply sensitive, and in his literary style was as much a poet as he was a prophet.
- The focus of Habakkuk's prophecy is Babylon. Obadiah spoke of the fate of Edom, Nahum the fate of Assyria, and Habakkuk the fate of Babylon.
- Habakkuk is a unique book. Unlike other prophets who declared God's message to people Habakkuk dialogued with God about people and circumstances that concerned him. The result is an intriguing interchange between a perplexed prophet and his Maker.
- A key point of interpretation concerning Habakkuk is his ever-present "why?" which was answered by the everlasting "Who!"

OUTLINE

- Dialogue with God. (1)
    - Habakkuk's first complaint. *How long, Lord, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, "Violence!" but you do not save? …Why do you tolerate wrongdoing? …the law is paralyzed, and justice never prevails. The wicked hem in the righteous, so that justice is perverted.* (1:1–4)
    - God's response. *"Look at the nations and watch — and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told. I am raising up the Babylonians… They are a feared and dreaded people… Their horses are swifter than leopards… They fly like an eagle swooping to devour; they all come intent on violence... They mock kings and scoff at rulers. They laugh at all fortified cities; by building earthen ramps they capture them. Then they sweep past like the wind and go on — guilty people, whose own strength is their god."* (1:5–11)
    - Habakkuk's second complaint. *Lord, are you not from everlasting? …You, Lord, have appointed them to execute judgment; you, my Rock, have ordained them to punish. Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrongdoing. Why then do you tolerate the treacherous? Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves? …The wicked foe pulls all of them up with hooks, he catches them in his net, he gathers them up in his dragnet; and so he rejoices and is glad... Is he to keep on emptying his net, destroying nations without mercy?* (1:12–17)
- A dirge. (2)
    - *I will stand at my watch and station myself on the ramparts; I will look to see what he will say to me, and what answer I am to give*

to this complaint. (2:1)
    - God's admonition. *Then the Lord replied: "Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it. For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay. "… the enemy is puffed up… he is arrogant and never at rest... he gathers to himself all the nations and takes captive all the peoples.* (2:2-5)
    - A series of 'woes.' (2:6–20)
        - *Woe to him who piles up stolen goods and makes himself wealthy by extortion! … Because you have plundered many nations, the peoples who are left will plunder you.* (2:6-8)
        - *Woe to him who builds his house by unjust gain… You have plotted the ruin of many peoples, shaming your own house and forfeiting your life.* (2:9-10)
        - *Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed and establishes a town by injustice! …For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD…* (2:12-14)
        - *Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbors, pouring it from the wineskin till they are drunk, so that he can gaze on their naked bodies! You will be filled with shame instead of glory...! The cup from the LORD's right hand is coming around to you… Of what value is an idol carved by a craftsman? Or an image that teaches lies? …The LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him.* (2:15-20)
- A Doxology. (3)
    - The power of God's presence. *…I stand in awe of your deeds, Lord… His glory covered the heavens, and his praise filled the earth. His splendor was like the sunrise… He stood, and shook the earth; he looked, and made the nations tremble... he marches on forever... You came out to deliver your people, to save your anointed one. You crushed the leader of the land of wickedness, you stripped him from head to foot. With his own spear you pierced his head when his warriors stormed out to scatter us… You trampled the sea with your horses, churning the great waters.* (3:3–15)
    - Habakkuk's peace. *I heard and my heart pounded… my legs trembled. Yet I will wait patiently for the day of calamity to come on the nation invading us... I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer; he enables me to tread on the heights...* (3:16–19)

ZEPHANIAH

- Because of the way he opened his book we know more about Zephaniah than any other Minor Prophet. He was the great-great-grandson of King Hezekiah and prophesied in Judah during the reign of Josiah, which makes him a contemporary of Jeremiah.
- Zephaniah focused on the coming "day of the Lord" that would purge Judah. He encouraged the people to return to God before that day. He also predicted the judgment and destruction of neighboring nations, but ended with a note of hope — God would bring his people home and restore their honor among the nations.

OUTLINE

- *The word of the LORD that came to Zephaniah son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah, during the reign of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah…* (1:1)
- The Day of God's Judgment (1:2–3:8)
    - Judgment on all the earth. *"I will sweep away everything from the face of the earth," declares the Lord. "I will sweep away both man and beast; I will sweep away the birds in the sky and the fish in the sea— and the idols that cause the wicked to stumble."* (1:2–3a)
    - Judgment on Judah and Jerusalem. *"When I destroy all mankind on the face of the earth," declares the Lord, "I will stretch out my hand against Judah and against all who live in Jerusalem...* (1:3b-4)
        - Idolatry. *I will destroy every remnant of Baal worship in this place… Be silent before the Sovereign Lord, for the day of the Lord is near.* (1:4-7)
        - Corruption. *I will punish the officials and the king's sons…* (1:8)
        - Dishonesty. …all your merchants will be wiped out, all who trade with silver will be destroyed. (1:11)
        - Complacency. *I will search Jerusalem with lamps and punish those who are complacent, who are like wine left on its dregs, who think, 'The Lord will do nothing, either good or bad.'* (1:12)
    - A Warning. *Gather together, gather yourselves together, you shameful nation, before the decree takes effect and that day passes like windblown chaff, before the LORD's fierce anger comes upon you, before the day of the LORD's wrath comes upon you. Seek the LORD, all you humble of the land, you who do what he commands. Seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you will be sheltered on the day of the LORD's anger.* (2:1–3)
    - Judgment on the surrounding nations (2:4–15)
        - Philistia. *Gaza will be abandoned, and Ashkelon left in ruins… Ashdod will be emptied and Ekron uprooted... the*

word of the LORD is against you, Canaan, land of the Philistines. He says, "I will destroy you, and none will be left…" That land will belong to the remnant of the people of Judah… The LORD their God will care for them; he will restore their fortunes. (2:4–7)
        - Moab and Ammon. *"I have heard the insults of Moab and the taunts of the Ammonites, who insulted my people and made threats against their land. Therefore, as surely as I live," declares the LORD… "Moab will become like Sodom, the Ammonites like Gomorrah… a wasteland forever. The remnant of my people will plunder them; the survivors of my nation will inherit their land."* (2:8–11)
        - Cush. *"You Cushites, too, will be slain by my sword."* (2:12)
        - Assyria. *He will stretch out his hand against the north and destroy Assyria, leaving Nineveh utterly desolate and dry as the desert... All who pass by her scoff and shake their fists.* (2:13–15)
    - Judgment on Jerusalem (3:1–7)
    - Zephaniah's indictment. *...She obeys no one, she accepts no correction. She does not trust in the LORD, she does not draw near to her God... her rulers are evening wolves… they are treacherous people. Her priests profane the sanctuary and do violence to the law… the unrighteous know no shame.* (3:1–5)
    - God's judgment. "I have destroyed nations; their strongholds are demolished. I have left their streets deserted… Their cities are laid waste; they are deserted and empty... I have decided to assemble the nations, to gather the kingdoms and to pour out my wrath on them— all my fierce anger. The whole world will be consumed by the fire of my jealous anger. (3:6–8)
- The Day of Restoration (3:9–20)
    - Restoration of the nations. *"I will purify the lips of the peoples, that all of them may call on the name of the LORD and serve him shoulder to shoulder... my scattered people, will bring me offerings."* (3:9–10)
    - Restoration of Israel. *On that day you, Jerusalem, will not be put to shame for all the wrongs you have done to me, because I will remove from you your arrogant boasters. Never again will you be haughty on my holy hill. But I will leave within you the meek and humble. The remnant of Israel will trust in the name of the LORD... Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, Daughter Jerusalem! The LORD has taken away your punishment, he has turned back your enemy... never again will you fear any harm... The LORD your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves... At that time I will deal with all who oppressed you... I will gather you… I will bring you home...* (3:11–20)

Lesson 25

HAGGAI

- Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi are known as the 'post-captivity prophets. They were prophets during the restoration of Jerusalem and the Temple.
- Whereas Haggai and Zechariah challenged the people to finish rebuilding the temple which had been discontinued, Malachi confronted the tragic sin and apostasy of God's people.
- Haggai was among the first group to go to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel (Ezra 2:2). He was probably born in Babylon during the captivity.

OUTLINE

- Haggai's First Message - Condemnation (1)
    - *In the second year of King Darius… the word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel… governor of Judah, and to Joshua… the high priest: "These people say, 'The time has not yet come to rebuild the Lord's house.'"* (1:1)
    - *Then the word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai:*
        - *"Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?*
        - *…Give careful thought to your ways. You have planted much but harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it…*
        - *Give careful thought to your ways. Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build my house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored…*
        - *You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home, I blew away. Why? …Because of my house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with your own house..."* (1:3-11)
    - The response.
        - *Then Zerubbabel… Joshua… the high priest, and the whole remnant of the people obeyed the voice of the LORD… and the message of the prophet Haggai… And the people feared the LORD.*
        - *Then Haggai, the LORD's messenger, gave this message of the LORD to the people: "I am with you…" So, the LORD stirred up… the spirit of the whole remnant of the people. They came and began to work on the house of the LORD… In the second year of King Darius,* (1:12–15)
- Haggai's second message - Encouragement (2:1–9)
    - *…In the second year of King Darius… the word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai: "Who of you is left who saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Does*

it not seem to you like nothing? But now be strong… all you people of the land, …and work. For I am with you… This is what I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt. And my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear.' (2:1–2)

- *This is what the LORD Almighty says: "In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. I will shake all nations, and what is desired by all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory… The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house… And in this place I will grant peace…"*

- Haggai's third message – Clean and Unclean (2:10–19)
  - *…in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Haggai: "Ask the priests what the law says: If someone carries consecrated meat in the fold of their garment, and that fold touches some bread or stew, some wine, olive oil or other food, does it become consecrated?" The priests answered, "No." Then Haggai said, "If a person defiled by contact with a dead body touches one of these things, does it become defiled?" "Yes," the priests replied… Then Haggai said, "So it is with this people and this nation in my sight," declares the LORD. "Whatever they do and whatever they offer there is defiled. "*
  - *"Now give careful thought to this from this day on—consider how things were before one stone was laid on another in the LORD's temple. When anyone came to a heap of twenty measures, there were only ten. When anyone went to a wine vat to draw fifty measures, there were only twenty. I struck all the work of your hands… with blight, mildew and hail, yet you did not return to me," declares the LORD. "…give careful thought to the day when the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid. From this day on I will bless you."*
- Haggai's fourth message – A Prophecy concerning Zerubbabel. *The word of the LORD came to Haggai… "Tell Zerubbabel governor of Judah that I am going to shake the heavens and the earth. I will overturn royal thrones and shatter the power of the foreign kingdoms. I will overthrow chariots and their drivers; horses and their riders will fall, each by the sword of his brother. On that day… I will take you, my servant Zerubbabel… and I will make you like my signet ring, for I have chosen you," declares the LORD Almighty."* (2:20-23)

ZECHARIAH

- Zechariah was contemporary with Haggai (Ezra 5:1; Haggai 1:1; Zechariah 1:1). He was both priest and prophet.
- He was a direct descendant of Aaron.
- There are more prophecies of Christ in Zechariah than in any other prophetic book except Isaiah. (1:14, 3:8, 6:12-13, 9:9-10, 11:12-13, 12:10, 13:7–9, 14:4, 9)

OUTLINE

- Eight Symbolic Visions (chaps. 1–6)
    - The introduction to the visions.
        - *In the… second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Zechariah… "The Lord was very angry with your ancestors. Therefore, tell the people: This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'Return to me… and I will return to you… Do not be like your ancestors… Turn from your evil ways and your evil practices' but they would not listen… did not my words and my decrees… overtake your ancestors?*
        - *Then they repented and said, 'The Lord Almighty has done to us what our ways and practices deserve, just as he determined to do.'*
    - The visions (1:7–6:8)
        - The red horse. *…During the night I had a vision, and there before me was a man mounted on a red horse. He was standing among the myrtle trees in a ravine. Behind him were red, brown and white horses. I asked, "What are these, my lord?" …Then the man standing among the myrtle trees explained, "They are the ones the LORD has sent to go throughout the earth." And they reported to the angel of the LORD who was standing among the myrtle trees, "We have gone throughout the earth and found the whole world at rest and in peace." …Then the angel who was speaking to me said, "Proclaim this word: 'I am very jealous for Jerusalem and Zion, and I am very angry with the nations that feel secure. …they went too far with the punishment. I will return to Jerusalem with mercy, and there my house will be rebuilt... My towns will again overflow with prosperity, and the LORD will again comfort Zion and choose Jerusalem.'"* (1:7-17)
        - The four horns. *Then I looked up, and there before me were four horns. I asked the angel who was speaking to me, "What are these?" He answered me, "These are the horns that scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem."* (Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome) *Then the LORD showed me four craftsmen. I asked, "What are these coming to do?" He an-*

swered, "These are the horns that scattered Judah so that no one could raise their head, but the craftsmen have come to terrify them and throw down these horns of the nations who lifted up their horns against the land of Judah to scatter its people." (1:18-21)

- The surveyor. *Then I looked up, and there before me was a man with a measuring line in his hand. I asked, "Where are you going?" He answered me, "To measure Jerusalem, to find out how wide and how long it is." While the angel who was speaking to me was leaving, another angel came to meet him and said to him: "Run, tell that young man, 'Jerusalem will be a city without walls because of the great number of people and animals in it. And I myself will be a wall of fire around it,' declares the LORD, and I will be its glory within...' After the Glorious One has sent me against the nations that have plundered you… I will surely raise my hand against them so that their slaves will plunder them. Then you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me. Shout and be glad… For I am coming, and I will live among you… Many nations will be joined with the LORD in that day and will become my people. I will live among you, and you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me to you… Be still before the LORD…* (2:1-13)
- Joshua, the Priest. *Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. The LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you!" ...Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. The angel said to those who were standing before him, "Take off his filthy clothes." Then he said to Joshua, "See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put fine garments on you." Then I said, "Put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the LORD stood by... "If you will walk in obedience to me and keep my requirements, then you will govern my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you a place among these standing here."* (3:1-10)
- The lampstand. *Then the angel who talked with me returned and woke me up, like someone awakened from sleep. He asked me, "What do you see?" I answered, "I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl at the top and seven lamps on it, with seven channels to the lamps. Also, there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left… What are these, my lord?" He answered… "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty... The*

hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; his hands will also complete it." …Then I asked the angel, "What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lampstand?" So, he said, "These are the two who are anointed to serve the Lord of all the earth." (4:1-14)

- The flying scroll. *I looked again, and there before me was a flying scroll. He asked me, "What do you see?" I answered, "I see a flying scroll, twenty cubits long and ten cubits wide* (about 30'x15')*." And he said to me, "This is the curse that is going out over the whole land; for according to what it says on one side, every thief will be banished, and according to what it says on the other, everyone who swears falsely will be banished..."* (5:1-4)
- The woman. *Then the angel who was speaking to me came forward and said to me, "Look up and see what is appearing." I asked, "What is it?" He replied, "It is a basket... This is the iniquity of the people throughout the land." Then the cover of lead was raised, and there in the basket sat a woman! He said, "This is wickedness," and he pushed her back into the basket and pushed its lead cover down on it. Then I looked up—and there before me were two women, with the wind in their wings! They had wings like those of a stork, and they lifted up the basket between heaven and earth. "Where are they taking the basket?" I asked… "To the country of Babylonia to build a house for it. When the house is ready, the basket will be set there in its place."* (5:5-11)
- The chariots. *I looked up again, and there before me were four chariots coming out from between two mountains—mountains of bronze. The first chariot had red horses, the second black, the third white, and the fourth dappled — all of them powerful. "These are the four spirits of heaven, going out from standing in the presence of the Lord of the whole world. The one with the black horses is going toward the north country, the one with the white horses toward the west, and the one with the dappled horses toward the south..." Then he called to me, "Look, those going toward the north country have given my Spirit rest in the land of the north."* (6:1-8)

- Four Messages (7–8)
  - A religious question. *In the fourth year of King Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah… The people of Bethel had sent Sharezer and Regem-Melek, together with their men, to entreat the LORD by asking the priests of the house of the LORD Almighty and the prophets, "Should I mourn and fast in the fifth month, as I have done for so many years?"* (7:1–3)
  - A message of rebuke. *"When you fasted and mourned in the fifth*

and seventh months for the past seventy years, was it really for me that you fasted? And when you were eating and drinking, were you not just feasting for yourselves?" (7:4–7)

- A message of repentance. *And the word of the LORD came again to Zechariah: "…Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor. Do not plot evil against each other…" But they refused to pay attention… So, the LORD Almighty was very angry. "When I called, they did not listen; so when they called, I would not listen… I scattered them… among all the nations, where they were strangers. The land they left behind them was so desolate that no one traveled through it. This is how they made the pleasant land desolate."* (7:8–14)
- A message of restoration. *This is what the Lord Almighty says: "…I will return to Zion and dwell in Jerusalem… Once again men and women of ripe old age will sit in the streets of Jerusalem… I will save my people from the countries of the east and the west. I will bring them back to live in Jerusalem; they will be my people, and I will be faithful and righteous to them as their God... Do not be afraid. These are the things you are to do: Speak the truth to each other and render true and sound judgment in your courts; do not plot evil against each other, and do not love to swear falsely. I hate all this," declares the Lord.* (8:1–17)
- A message of rejoicing. *This is what the LORD Almighty says: "…And many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the LORD Almighty…"* (8:18–23)

- Prophecies (chaps. 9–14)
  - *Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey... He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.* (9:9-10)
  - *Ask the LORD for rain in the springtime… He gives showers of rain to all people… The idols speak deceitfully, diviners see visions that lie; they tell dreams that are false, they give comfort in vain. Therefore, the people wander like sheep oppressed for lack of a shepherd. My anger burns against the shepherds, and I will punish the leaders; for the LORD Almighty will care for his flock…* (10:1-5)
  - *"I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling. Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem. On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves... I will strike every horse with panic and its rider with madness… I will make the clans of Judah like a firepot in a woodpile, like a flaming torch among sheaves. They will consume all the surrounding peo-*

ples right and left, but Jerusalem will remain intact in her place. (12:1-6)

- *"...I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son...* (12:10-14)
- *A day of the LORD is coming, Jerusalem, when your possessions will be plundered and divided up within your very walls. I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to fight against it; the city will be captured… Half of the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people will not be taken from the city. Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations… On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives… and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley… You will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him… living water will flow out from Jerusalem… The LORD will be king over the whole earth… there will be one LORD, and his name the only name… Jerusalem will be raised up high from the Benjamin Gate to the site of the First Gate, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the royal winepresses and will remain in its place... never again will it be destroyed...* (14)



MALACHI

- Malachi prophesied after the days of Nehemiah when the condition of the Jews had become deplorable.
- After Malachi a period of four hundred years of silence began and did not end until Gabriel appeared to Zechariah (Luke 1:5-23), and Mary (Luke 1:26-38).

OUTLINE

- Introduction. *"A prophecy: The word of the Lord to Israel through Malachi.* (1:1)
- Malachi's First Oracle. *"I have loved you," says the LORD. "…Was not Esau Jacob's brother? Yet I have loved Jacob, but Esau I have hated, and I have turned his hill country into a wasteland… They may build, but I will demolish… You will see it with your own eyes and say, 'Great is the LORD—even beyond the borders of Israel!'*
- Malachi's Second Oracle. (1:6–2:9)
    - *"A son honors his father, and a slave his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me? …It is you priests who show contempt for my name... By offering defiled food on my altar... When you offer blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice lame or diseased animals, is that not wrong? …Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not light useless fires on my altar! I am not pleased with you… and I will accept no offering from your hands... If you do not listen, and if you do not resolve to honor my name… I will send a curse on you, and I will curse your blessings... I have sent you this warning so that my covenant with Levi may continue… the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, because he is the messenger of the LORD Almighty and people seek instruction from his mouth. But you have turned from the way and by your teaching have caused many to stumble; you have violated the covenant with Levi… So, I have caused you to be despised and humiliated before all the people, because you have not followed my ways…"* (1:6-2:9)
- Malachi's Third Oracle. (2:10–16)
    - *Do we not all have one Father? Did not one God create us? Why do we profane the covenant of our ancestors by being unfaithful to one another? Judah has been unfaithful… by marrying women who worship a foreign god. As for the man who does this… may the LORD remove him from the tents of Jacob — even though he brings an offering to the LORD…* (2:10-12)
    - *…You flood the LORD's altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer looks with favor on your offerings or accepts them… It is because the LORD is the witness between you and the wife of your youth. You have been unfaithful to her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant… So be on your*

guard, and do not be unfaithful to the wife of your youth... The man who hates and divorces his wife… does violence to the one he should protect…" (2:13-16)

- Malachi's Fourth Oracle. *You have wearied the LORD with your words... by saying, "All who do evil are good in the eyes of the LORD, and he is pleased with them" or "Where is the God of justice?" …the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple… But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire… "So, I will come to put you on trial. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive the foreigners among you of justice…* (2:17–3:5)
- Malachi's Fifth Oracle. *"I the LORD do not change. So, you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed... you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you… Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me... In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse — your whole nation — because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this… and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it... Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land…"* (3:6–12)
- Malachi's Sixth Oracle. *"You have spoken arrogantly against me… You have said, 'It is futile to serve God. What do we gain by carrying out his requirements… Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the LORD and honored his name. "On the day when I act… they will be my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as a father has compassion and spares his son who serves him. And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not. Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and the day that is coming will set them on fire…* (3:13–4:3)
- Conclusion. *"Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at Horeb for all Israel. See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents; or else I will come and strike the land with total destruction."* (4:4–6)

Lesson 26

The Inter-Testament Period

- The period between Malachi and Matthew covers about four hundred years.
- The Old Testament canon of Scripture closed with Malachi about 397BC.
    - The Assyrians destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel in 722BC, before being conquered by the Babylonians.
    - The Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and took a large number of the Jews into captivity in 587 BC.
    - As Daniel prophesied (Daniel 2; 7), Babylon was conquered by the Medo-Persian Empire and King Cyrus issued a decree allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple.
    - Under Zerubbabel a remnant returned and twenty-one years later the temple was completed (515 BC).
    - Ezra led a small group back to Jerusalem and restored the worship in the temple, followed by Nehemiah who supervised rebuilding the city walls.
- When the Book of Malachi ended the Jewish remnant was back in Judah with worship restored and the temple and Jerusalem rebuilt, but a large number of the Jews remained in captivity and never returned.
- The four hundred period between Malachi and Matthew divides into six political periods of Jewish submission:
    - The Persians (538 BC). The Jews were under Persian rule at the end of Malachi and remained so for the first sixty years of the Inter-Testament period.
        - During this time the rival worship of the Samaritan people was established. The Samaritans came into being because of the unrest in Palestine:
            - In 721 BC the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom scattered by Assyria. The Assyrian emperor repopulated the cities of Israel and the result was a mixed people known as Samaritans.
            - When Nehemiah was traveling to Jerusalem and attempting to rebuild the wall, he and his workers faced significant opposition from the Samaritans (Nehemiah 2:10; 4:1–3).
        - By the days of Jesus, the animosity between Jews and Samaritans had escalated to the point where Samaritans were despised and considered unclean.
    - The Greeks (333 BC). Alexander the Great transformed the face of the world in just ten years. He is spoken of by Daniel in his prophecies (Daniel 7:6; 8:1–7, 21–23)
    - The Egyptians (323 BC). The death of Alexander the Great resulted in Judea falling into the hands of the Ptolemaic kings (a line of

Greek kings over Egypt). They founded the Alexandrian library, as well as commissioning the Septuagint (The Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament).

- The Syrians (204 BC). Antiochus Epiphanes came to power in 175 BC and a reign of terror fell on all Jews. He destroyed wrecked Jerusalem, tore down the walls and killed the people. He desecrated the rebuilt temple, culminating in the offering of a pig on the altar of sacrifice and erecting statues of false gods on the altar (Daniel 8:13).
- The Maccabeans (165 BC). The excesses of Antiochus Epiphanes provoked a revolt by an aging priest, Mattathias, and continued by his son, Judas Maccabeus. Judas Maccabeus restored the temple and orthodox worship. He was killed in battle and succeeded by his brother, Jonathan, who united civil and priestly authority, and began the Hasmonean line of high priests. Jonathan was killed and succeeded by his brother, Simon. He was succeeded by his son, John Hyrcanus who reigned 21 years.
- The Romans (63 B.C. to Christ). When the Maccabean line ended, Judea became a province of the Roman Empire. Julius Caesar appointed Antipater to rule over Judea in 47BC. Antipater appointed his son, Herod governor of Galilee. Herod was then appointed king of the Jews by Rome in 40 BC. He was extremely paranoid and murdered nearly all of his own family including his wife and sons so as to avoid the possibility of rebellion. He was still king when Jesus Christ was born.

- The political upheaval and submission of the 400-year period between Malachi and Matthew also impacted Jewish religious customs and practices.
    - New religious groups such as the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Scribes were formed sometime during this period.
        - The Pharisees. The Pharisees held that the Oral Law was given orally to Moses, to Joshua, to the elders, to the prophets, and then to the men of the great synagogue. The Pharisees were the interpreters of the Oral Law. The name Pharisee means “separatists.” (Luke 7:39, Luke 15:2, Matthew 9:11)
        - The Sadducees. The Sadducees rejected the Oral Law and held only to “the law,” meaning the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy). They did not believe in the spirit world, angels, immortality, or the resurrection of the dead (Acts 23:8). Sadducee means “righteous ones.” (Matthew 16:1, 11: 22:23; Acts 23:6, 12).
        - Scribes. The oldest of the three groups by far, Scribes existed back to the days of Israel’s kings. However, from the time of the Babylonian captivity, a group developed who were not just transcribers or secretaries, but a group who saw themselves as the expounders, guardians, and teachers

of Scripture. Neither priests or Pharisees, they became a distinguished order in the nation. Jesus denounced the scribes because of their corruption and false piety (Matthew 23:13–18).

- New institutions such as the synagogue and the Sanhedrin were accepted.
    - The Synagogue. There is no mention of synagogues in the Old Testament, but when the New Testament begins, they are widespread and accepted as normal in Jewish communities. Therefore, it is likely they began to develop during the captivity as Jewish people who no longer had a temple needed a teacher and a place for the reading of Scripture. They were common by Jesus' time (Matthew 4:23; 9:35; Luke 4:15, 44; Acts 13:5; 14:1; 17:10; 18:19) as a congregational, but not priestly institution.
    - The Sanhedrin. Sometime during the 400 Years of Silence the Sanhedrin developed as the civil and religious tribunal of the Jewish people (Matthew 16:21; Mark 14:55; 15:1; Luke 22:66; John 11:47; Acts 4:15; 5:21, 27, 34, 41; 6:12, 15; 22:30; 23:1, 6, 15, 20, 28; 24:20). The Sanhedrin was made up of 71 members:
        - The high priest.
        - 24 chief priests who represented the twenty-four orders of the priesthood.
        - 24 elders.
        - 22 scribes.

Introduction to the New Testament

- A major thread that ties the New Testament to the Old Testament is FULFILLMENT.
    - Again and again, we will see phrases like, "That it might be fulfilled" (Matthew 1:22; 4:14; 12:17; 13:35; 21:4; 26:56; 27:9, 35; John 12:38; 13:18; 15:25; 17:12; 19:24; 19:28; 36. 3).
    - Jesus said, *"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them"* (Matthew 5:17); and, *"Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing"* (Luke 4:21).
    - The New Testament in Jesus, his teachings and actions, is the fulfillment of the Old Testament.
- At the beginning of his gospel, Luke wrote, *"Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word"* (Luke 1:1-2). So, we know accounts of Jesus and his life were written down in the early 1st Century.
    - Documents were originally handwritten on separate scrolls and additional copies had to be made by hand. In many cases, one per-

son would read at dictation speed while several others would take down the dictation, and others would check each copy against the original.

- Over time the scroll gave way to the codex, a book bound more or less like a modern book.
- Because the early church, even within the Roman Empire, was made up of highly diverse groups, it was not long before the New Testament, and in fact the whole Bible, was translated into other languages. Here are some points along the way to the English language Bibles we know today:
    - Around AD390, Damasus, Bishop of Rome, commissioned Jerome to prepare an official Latin version that could be widely distributed. This Latin version, revised several times, became the Vulgate, published around 400.
    - The English language Bible was produced in the 1380's by John Wycliffe, an Oxford professor and theologian. Wycliffe's translation was based on the Latin Vulgate, which was the only source text available to him. The Pope was so infuriated by his teachings and his translation of the Bible into English, that 44 years after Wycliffe had died, he ordered the bones to be dug up, crushed, and scattered in the river! One of Wycliffe's followers, John Hus, was burned at the stake in 1415, with Wycliffe's manuscript Bibles used as kindling for the fire.
    - The chapter divisions commonly used today were developed by Stephen Langton, an Archbishop of Canterbury. Langton put the modern chapter divisions into place around 1227. The Wycliffe English Bible was the first Bible to use chapter numbers. Since then, nearly all Bible translations have included chapter numbers.
    - Johann Gutenberg invented the printing press in the 1450s, and the first book to be printed was a Latin Vulgate, printed in Germany. The invention of the movable-type printing press meant that books could be produced in large quantities in a short period of time. This would prove essential to making the Bible available to the masses and would fuel the Protestant Reformation.
    - When Constantinople fell to the Turks in 1453, many scholars fled to the west bringing their Greek manuscripts, which were more closely aligned with the original texts, with them. Today there are roughly 5,000 of these manuscripts (or fragments of manuscripts) still in existence.
    - On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther nailed his now-famous 95 Theses of Contention (a list of 95 issues of heretical theology and crimes of the Roman Catholic Church) to the church door at Wittenberg. This is commonly considered the birth of the Protestant Reformation, but that movement

was gaining momentum all over Europe.

- Desiderius Erasmus, a Dutch scholar, completed a definitive translation in 1527 that had three parallel columns: the Greek, the Vulgate, and Erasmus's own Latin translation. All the early editions of the Greek New Testament were copies or adaptations of the work of Erasmus.
- William Tyndale holds the distinction of being the first to ever print the New Testament in the English language. After his death, two of his followers, Myles Coverdale and John Rogers carried the translation forward. Coverdale printed the first complete Bible in the English language in 1535 and is known as the Coverdale Bible.
- In 1534 King Henry VIII requested that the Pope permit him to divorce his wife and marry his mistress. The Pope refused. King Henry responded by marrying his mistress anyway, renouncing Roman Catholicism, and establishing the Church of England (Anglican Church). He then funded the printing of the first the first legal English Bible, many say just to spite the Pope.
- After King Henry VIII, King Edward VI took the throne, and after his death, Queen "Bloody" Mary came to power. She was bent on returning England to the Roman Church and in 1555 she had John Rogers, among others burned at the stake. Many Protestant refugees fled to Geneva led by Myles Coverdale and John Foxe. With their help the Church of Geneva produced an English Bible in 1560. This was the first Bible to add numbered verses to the chapters, as well as extensive marginal notes and references so that this translation is considered the first English "Study Bible". William Shakespeare quotes hundreds of times in his plays from the Geneva translation of the Bible. It became the English Bible of choice for more than 100 years and heavily influenced the King James Bible of 1611. The Geneva was also the first Bible taken to American with the Puritans and Pilgrims.
- When Queen Mary's reign ended, Queen Elizabeth I assumed the throne, followed by Prince James VI of Scotland, who became King James I of England. Protestant clergy approached the king with a desire to produce a Bible for common people, in their minds a "translation to end all translations." They worked from 1605 – 1610 and published the King James Bible in 1611. It turned out to be an excellent and accurate translation, becoming the most printed book in the history of the world with over one billion copies in print.
  *NOTE: For the past 250 years, all King James Version Bibles published anywhere by any publisher are actually

Blaney's 1769 Revised Oxford Edition of the 1611 King James Bible. The original 1611 preface is almost always deceivingly included by modern Bible publishing companies with no mention of the 1769 version so as not to hurt sales among those who think they are reading the original 1611 version.

- In 1885 Cambridge scholars published the English Revised Version. Not to be outdone, American scholars published the nearly identical American Standard Version in 1901, which was revised and called the New American Standard Bible in 1971. The New American Standard Bible and subsequent revisions are considered by nearly all Christian scholars and translators to be the most accurate, word-for-word translation of the original Greek and Hebrew scriptures into modern English that has ever been produced. It remains the most popular version among theologians, professors, scholars, and seminary students today.
- In 1973, the New International Version was produced as a "dynamic equivalent" translation into modern English. It was designed for "phrase-for-phrase" accuracy, and ease of reading even at a Junior High-School reading level. It was meant to appeal to a broader cross-section of the general public. It has become the best-selling modern-English translation of the Bible ever published.
- In 1982, Thomas Nelson Publishers produced the "New King James Version," to appeal to King James Version loyalists, while updating obscure words and Elizabethan "thee, thy, thou" pronouns. However, upon discovering that this was not enough of a change for them to be able to legally copyright the result, publishers had to make more significant revisions and, while it has enjoyed a degree of public acceptance, it has never taken seriously by scholars.
- In 2002, a major attempt was made to bridge the gap between the readability of the N.I.V., and the extremely precise accuracy of the N.A.S.B. This translation is called the English Standard Version.

The Books of the New Testament

- Gospels.
    - Synoptics:
        - Matthew
        - Mark
        - Luke
    - John
- History - Acts.
- Epistles (letters written by an Apostle).
    - Paul's Epistles:
        - Romans
        - 1 & 2 Corinthians
        - Galatians
        - Ephesians
        - Philippians
        - Colossians
        - 1 & 2 Thessalonians
        - 1 & 2 Timothy
        - Titus
        - Philemon
    - General Epistles: There are eight general letters.
        - Hebrews
        - James
        - 1 & 2 Peter
        - 1, 2, & 3 John
        - Jude
- Prophecy - Revelation.

Chronology of the Synoptic Gospels

- Matthew 1-2; Luke 1-2
- Mathew 3–4; 12:1-32; Mark 1–3; Luke 3–6
- Matthew 5-7
- Matthew 8:1-13; 11; 12:33-50 Luke 7; 8:19-21; 11
- Matthew 8:14–10:42; 13 Mark 4–5; Luke 8:1-18; 22-56
- Matthew 14:1–15:31; Mark 6–7; Luke 9:1-17
- Matthew 15:32–18:9; Mark 8–9; Luke 9:18-62
- Matthew 18:10-35; Luke 10:1–12:12
- Matthew 19–20; Mark 10; Luke 12:13–19:27
- Matthew 21–25, Mark 11–13, Luke 19:28–21:38
- Matthew 26:1-46; Mark 14:1-42; Luke 22:1-46
- Matthew 26:47–28:20; Mark 14:43–16:20; Luke 22:47–24:53

Lesson 27

THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS
(Matthew, Mark, Luke)

* **NOTE:** ***This is a feeble attempt to approach the Synoptic Gospels in chronological order. Some scholars place the events we will study in a different order. This is a 'best guess,' a hypothesis and should be considered such.***

- The first three Gospels are often called Synoptic Gospels, from the Latin, *synopsis*, *syn* meaning "together" and *opsis* meaning "a view." So, Matthew, Mark, and Luke are the synoptics in that they give a similar account of the life of Jesus while still maintaining the unique styles of their authors.
    - Matthew was a "publican" (Matthew 10:3), a Jew who had become a tax collector for the hated Romans. He is also known as Levi in Luke 5:27 and Mark 2:14. He wrote primarily for Jewish Christians and presented Jesus as King, a descendent of Abraham, Joseph, and King David.
    - Mark was a young follower of Jesus and a friend of Peter (1 Peter 5:13). He was not an Apostle and is probably the young man who ran away when the soldiers arrested Jesus at Gethsemane, *"When they seized him, he fled naked, leaving his garment behind"* (Mark 14:52). He was a cousin of Barnabas (Acts 15:36-39). Mark probably wrote his book with Peter dictating the content. He wrote to Roman Christians and presented Jesus as a servant, focusing on what the Lord did during his life.
    - Luke was a physician (Colossians 4:14), but not an Apostle. He wrote his Gospel, as well as the Book of Acts, both addressed to someone named but someone named, Theophilus (Luke 1:3, Acts 1:1). He was one of Paul's traveling companions. He wrote mainly for Greek Christians and presented Jesus as the Son of Man.
- Since the synoptics cover many of the same events in the life of Christ we will study them at the same time.

OUTLINE

- The coming of Christ. (Matthew 1-2; Luke 1-2)
    - Advent. *In the time of Herod… there was a priest named Zechariah… his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron... But they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old. Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense... Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him… the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John... He is never to take wine*

or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born... he will go on before the Lord… to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Zechariah asked… "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man, and my wife is well along in years." The angel said to him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news... now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words… When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs to them… After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant… "The Lord has done this for me," she said. (Luke 1:5-25)

- Annunciation. *In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words… But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So, the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth, your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail." "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.* (Luke 1:26-38)
- Birth of John the Baptist. *...Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear… When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son... On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah, but his mother spoke up and said, "No! He is to be called John." They said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who has that name." Then they made signs to his father, to find out what he would like to name the child. He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone's astonishment he wrote, "His name is John." Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue set free, and he began to speak, prais-*

ing God... And the child grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the wilderness until he appeared publicly to Israel. (Luke 1:39-80)

- Joseph, an honorable man. *This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph, her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." ...When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife...* (Mathew 1:18-25)
- The Birth of Christ. *In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world... And everyone went to their own town to register. So, Joseph also went up… to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were*

just as they had been told. On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise the child, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he was conceived. (Luke 2:1-21)

- Genealogy. *This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah the son of David, the son of Abraham: Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers… Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of King David, David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife… Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, and Mary was the mother of Jesus who is called the Messiah. Thus, there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Messiah.* (Matthew 1:1–17)
- The Magi. *After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." When King Herod heard this, he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written… Then Herod called the Magi secretly… He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him." After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.* (Matthew 2:1-12)
- Escaping from Herod. *When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him." So, he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod... When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi... After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those*

who were trying to take the child's life are dead." So, he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. (Matthew 2:13-23)

- The boy Jesus. *And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him. Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, ...Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you." "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" ...Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.* (Luke 2:40-52)
- John the Baptist prepares the way. (Matthew 3; Mark 1; Luke 3) *In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." ...John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham... I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry."* (Matthew 3:1-12)
- Jesus prepares for his ministry.
    - Baptism. *Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented. As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and*

he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:13-17)

- Temptation. *Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'" Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.* (Matthew 4:1-11)

- Jesus' ministry begins.
  - *...when John rebuked Herod the tetrarch because of his marriage to Herodias, his brother's wife, and all the other evil things he had done, Herod added this to them all: He locked John up in prison.* (Luke 3:19-20) *After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"* (Mark 1:14-15).
  - The first disciples. *One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!"* (Luke 5:1-8) *"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." At once they left their nets and followed him.* (Matthew 4:19-20) *When he had gone a*

little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him. (Mark 1:19-20)

- *They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!" "Be quiet!" said Jesus sternly. "Come out of him!" The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek… News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee. As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they immediately told Jesus about her. So, he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her, and she began to wait on them. That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon possessed. The whole town gathered at the door, and Jesus healed many who had various diseases... Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!" Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come."* (Mark 1:21-39)
- Rejected at Nazareth. *He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." ...He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. "Isn't this Joseph's son?" they asked. Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself!' And you will tell me, 'Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.' Truly I tell you," he continued, "no prophet is accepted in his hometown. I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in*

Zarephath in the region of Sidon. And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian." All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him off the cliff. But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way. (Luke 4:16-30)

- *Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed; and he healed them. Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him.* (Matthew 4:23-25)
    - *A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean." Jesus was indignant. He reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed. Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning: "See that you don't tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them." Instead, he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.* (Mark 1:40-45)
    - *A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven." Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? But I want you to know that the Son of Man has*

authority on earth to forgive sins." So, he said to the man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!" (Mark 2:1-12)

- Levi (Matthew) *After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. "Follow me," Jesus said to him, and Levi got up, left everything and followed him. Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."* (Luke 5:27-32)
- The Sabbath Day. *One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and his disciples began to pick some heads of grain, rub them in their hands and eat the kernels. Some of the Pharisees asked, "Why are you doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?" Jesus answered them, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? He entered the house of God, and taking the consecrated bread, he ate what is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions." Then Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath." On another Sabbath he went into the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was shriveled. The Pharisees and the teachers of the law were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal on the Sabbath. But Jesus knew what they were thinking and said to the man with the shriveled hand, "Get up and stand in front of everyone." So, he got up and stood there. Then Jesus said to them, "I ask you, which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?" He looked around at them all, and then said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He did so, and his hand was completely restored. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law were furious and began to discuss with one another what they might do to Jesus.* (Luke 6:1-11)

- The Apostles. *...Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles: Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew (Levi), Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.* (Luke 6:12-16)

- The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7; Luke 6:17-49)
  Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them. (Matthew 5:1)
    - The Beatitudes. (Matthew 5:1-12)
        - *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
        - *Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*
        - *Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.*
        - *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*
        - *Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.*
        - *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*
        - *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*
        - *Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
        - *Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven…*
    - Salt and Light. *You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.*
    - The Law. *Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Therefore, anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.*
    - Murder. *You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,' is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell. Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember*

that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift…

- Adultery. *You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.*
- Divorce. *It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.' But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her the victim of adultery, and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.*
- Oaths. *Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.' But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King… All you need to say is simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.*
- Dealing with enemies.
    - *You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.*
    - *You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*
- Motivation for righteousness. *Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. So, when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by*

others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

- Prayer.
    - *And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.*
    - *And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him...*
    - The Lord's Prayer. *This, then, is how you should pray: " 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.' For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.*
- Fasting. *When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.*
- Treasure. *Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also... You cannot serve both God and money.*
- Worry. *Therefore, I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin.*

Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well...

- Judgementalism. *Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.*
- Sacred Things. *Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet and turn and tear you to pieces.*
- The things of God. *Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. "Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!*
- The Golden Rule. *So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.*
- The narrow way. *Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.*
- False prophets. *Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them... A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit... Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.*
- The Word of God. *Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a*

foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

- Jesus' Ministry.
  - Jesus healed many.
    - A paralyzed man. *"Some men brought to him a paralyzed man, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the man, 'Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven.' At this, some of the teachers of the law said to themselves, 'This fellow is blaspheming!' Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, 'Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts? Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.' So, he said to the paralyzed man, 'Get up, take your mat and go home.' Then the man got up and went home. When the crowd saw this, they were filled with awe; and they praised God, who had given such authority to man"* (Matthew 9:2-8).
    - Two blind men. *As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" "Yes, Lord," they replied. Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith let it be done to you" and their sight was restored. Jesus warned them sternly, "See that no one knows about this." But they went out and spread the news about him all over that region.* (Matthew 9:27-31)
    - The blind man. *"They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him. He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had spit on the man's eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, "Do you see anything?" He looked up and said, "I see people; they look like trees walking around." Once more Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. Jesus sent him home, saying, "Don't even go into the village."* (Mark 8:22-26)
  - The faith of the centurion. *Now when Jesus returned, a crowd welcomed him, for they were all expecting him. Then a man named Jairus, a synagogue leader, came and fell at Jesus' feet, pleading with him to come to his house because his only daughter, a girl of about twelve, was dying. As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no one could heal her. She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped. "Who touched me?" Jesus*

asked. When they all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you." But Jesus said, "Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me." Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed. Then he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace." While Jesus was still speaking, someone came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. "Your daughter is dead," he said. "Don't bother the teacher anymore." Hearing this, Jesus said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed." When he arrived at the house of Jairus, he did not let anyone go in with him except Peter, John and James, and the child's father and mother. Meanwhile, all the people were wailing and mourning for her. "Stop wailing," Jesus said. "She is not dead but asleep." They laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. But he took her by the hand and said, "My child, get up!" Her spirit returned, and at once she stood up. Then Jesus told them to give her something to eat. Her parents were astonished, but he ordered them not to tell anyone what had happened. (Luke 8:40-56)

- The cost of following Jesus. *"As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." He said to another man, "Follow me." But he replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God." Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family." Jesus replied, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."* (Luke 9:57-62)
- Jesus sends out The Twelve. *Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness... "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. As you go, proclaim this message: 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give. Do not get any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belts — no bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff, for the worker is worth his keep. Whatever town or village you enter, search there for some worthy person and stay at their house until you leave... If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet... I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore, be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. Be on your guard; you will be handed over to the local*

councils and be flogged in the synagogues... But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time, you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you... Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven... Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me... Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me… And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward." (Matthew 10)

- John the Baptist is executed. *On Herod's birthday the daughter of Herodias danced for the guests and pleased Herod so much that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. Prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist." The king was distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he ordered that her request be granted and had John beheaded in the prison. His head was brought in on a platter and given to the girl, who carried it to her mother. John's disciples came and took his body and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus.* (Matthew 14:6-12)
- Jesus feeds the 5,000. *When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done. Then he took them with him, and they withdrew by themselves to a town called Bethsaida, but the crowds learned about it and followed him. He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God and healed those who needed healing. Late in the afternoon the Twelve came to him and said, "Send the crowd away so they can go to the surrounding villages and countryside and find food and lodging, because we are in a remote place here." He replied, "You give them something to eat." They answered, "We have only five loaves of bread and two fish—unless we go and buy food for all this crowd." (About five thousand men were there.) But he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each." The disciples did so, and everyone sat down. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to distribute to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.* (Luke 9:10-17)
- Jesus walks on water. *Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray. Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. Shortly before dawn he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them, but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, because they all saw him and were*

terrified. Immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened. (Mark 6:45-52)

- Peter's confession. *When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.* (Matthew 16:13-20)
- Jesus tells of his death and resurrection.
    - *While everyone was marveling at all that Jesus did, he said to his disciples, "Listen carefully to what I am about to tell you: The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men." But they did not understand what this meant. It was hidden from them, so that they did not grasp it, and they were afraid to ask him about it. An argument started among the disciples as to which of them would be the greatest. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took a little child and had him stand beside him. Then he said to them, "Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For it is the one who is least among you all who is the greatest."* (Luke 9:43-48)
    - *He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."* (Mark 8:31-33)
- The Transfiguration. *After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah,*

talking with Jesus. Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!" When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid." When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus. As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, "Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead." (Matthew 17:1-9)

- Dealing with conflict and sin. *"If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector. "Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. "Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."* (Matthew 18:15-20)
- Jesus sends out the 70. *After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road... When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' ...Whoever listens to you listens to me; whoever rejects you rejects me; but whoever rejects me rejects him who sent me." The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." ...Then he turned to his disciples and said privately, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it."* (Luke 10:1-24)

- Mary and Martha. *As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."* (Luke 10:38-42)
- Jesus tells of his second coming. *"Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, like servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes... even if he comes in the middle of the night or toward daybreak. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."* (Luke 12:35-40)
- The duty of faith. *"Things that cause people to stumble are bound to come, but woe to anyone through whom they come... So, watch yourselves. If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive them… If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you... when you have done everything you were told to do …say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.'"* (Luke 17:1-10)
- The 10 Lepers. *Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!" When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed. One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan. Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."* (Luke 17:11-19)
- The Children. *People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the*

little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them. (Mark 10:13-16)

- The Rich Ruler. *A certain ruler asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. You know the commandments: 'You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.'" "All these I have kept since I was a boy," he said. When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was very wealthy. Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."* (Luke 18:18-25)
- Servanthood. *Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do for us whatever we ask." "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked. They replied, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory." "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?" "We can," they answered. Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared." When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."* (Mark 10:35-45)
- Zacchaeus. *"Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has*

gone to be the guest of a sinner." But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." (Luke 10:1-10)

- Selected Parables.
  - The Sower. *"A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. Whoever has ears, let them hear... When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."* (Matthew 13:3-23)
  - The Weeds. *"The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' 'An enemy did this,' he replied. The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' 'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time, I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'"* (Matthew 13:24-30)
  - The Unforgiving Servant. *"Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had*

be sold to repay the debt. "At this the servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded. "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.' "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened. "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart." (Matthew 18:23-35)

- The Good Samaritan. *"A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers? ...Go and do likewise."* (Luke 10:30-36)
- The Rich Fool. *"The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.' But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God."* (Luke 12:16-21)

- Lost Things. (Luke 15)
    - The Lost Sheep. *"Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent."*
    - The Lost Coin. *"Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."*
    - The Lost Son. *"There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So, he divided his property between them. Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So, he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.' So, he got up and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So, they began to celebrate. Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So, he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. 'Your brother has come,'*

he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.' The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So, his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!' 'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'"

- The Vineyard Workers. *"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard. "About nine in the morning he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. He told them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went. "He went out again about noon and about three in the afternoon and did the same thing. About five in the afternoon he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, 'Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?' " 'Because no one has hired us,' they answered. "He said to them, 'You also go and work in my vineyard.' "When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.' "The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius. So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. 'These who were hired last worked only one hour,' they said, 'and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.' "But he answered one of them, 'I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn't you agree to work for a denarius? Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?' "So the last will be first, and the first will be last."* (Matthew 20:1-16)
- The Bridesmaids. *"At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy*

and fell asleep. "At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!' "Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.' " 'No,' they replied, 'there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.' "But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. "Later the others also came. 'Lord, Lord,' they said, 'open the door for us!' "But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I don't know you.' "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour. (Matthew 25:1-13)

- The Talents. "*Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. "After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.' "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' "The man with two bags of gold also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.' "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' "Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.' "His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. " 'So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'* (Matthew 25:14-30)

- Sheep and Goats. *"'When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.' "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' "He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."* (Matthew 25:31-46)

- Passion Week.
  - *Now Jesus was going up to Jerusalem. On the way, he took the Twelve aside and said to them, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!"* (Matthew 20:17-19)
  - The Triumphal Entry. *As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away." This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: "Say to Daughter Zion, 'See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.' " The disciples*

went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna in the highest heaven!" When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?" The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee." Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. "It is written," he said to them, " 'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it 'a den of robbers.'" The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple courts, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they were indignant. "Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him. "Yes," replied Jesus, "have you never read, " 'From the lips of children and infants you, Lord, have called forth your praise'?" And he left them and went out of the city to Bethany, where he spent the night. (Matthew 21:1-17)

- Mary anoints Jesus. *"While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head. Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, "Why this waste of perfume? It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor." And they rebuked her harshly. "Leave her alone," said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."* (Mark 14:3-9)
- The Greatest Commandment. *One of the teachers of the law… asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." "Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all*

your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions. (Mark 12:28-34)

- The Widow's Offering. *As he taught, Jesus said, "Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely." Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on."* (Mark 12:38-44)
- Jesus' Prophetic Message. *"Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains. Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come... At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Messiah!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect... And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other... But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew*

nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left. "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come... So, you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him... It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns... But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time,' and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matthew 24)

- The Plot to Betray Jesus. *Now the Festival of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover, was approaching, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some way to get rid of Jesus, for they were afraid of the people. Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve. And Judas went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus. They were delighted and agreed to give him money. He consented, and watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them when no crowd was present.* (Luke 22:1-8)
- The Passover Meal. *"On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?" He replied, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.'" So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover. When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. And while they were eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me." They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, "Surely you don't mean me, Lord?" Jesus replied, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born." Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, "Surely you don't mean me, Rabbi?" Jesus answered, "You have said so." While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant,*

which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. (Matthew 26:17-30)

- Jesus predicts Peter's denial. *Then Jesus told them, "This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee." Peter replied, "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will." "Truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." But Peter declared, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the other disciples said the same.* (Matthew 26:31-35)
- Gethsemane. *They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch." Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. "Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will." Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Simon," he said to Peter, "are you asleep? Couldn't you keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him. Returning the third time, he said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"* (Mark 14:32-42)
- Jesus is arrested. *Just as he was speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders. Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard." Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Rabbi!" and kissed him. The men seized Jesus and arrested him. Then one of those standing near drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. "Am I leading a rebellion," said Jesus, "that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled." Then everyone deserted him and fled. A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment, was following Jesus. When they seized him, he fled*

naked, leaving his garment behind. (Mark 14:43-52)

- The Sanhedrin Trial. *Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled. But Peter followed him at a distance, right up to the courtyard of the high priest. He entered and sat down with the guards to see the outcome. The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward. Finally two came forward and declared, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.' " Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" But Jesus remained silent. The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God." "You have said so," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?" "He is worthy of death," they answered. Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him and said, "Prophesy to us, Messiah. Who hit you?"* (Matthew 26:57-68)
- Peter's denial. *Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. "You also were with Jesus of Galilee," she said. But he denied it before them all. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said. Then he went out to the gateway, where another servant girl saw him and said to the people there, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth." He denied it again, with an oath: "I don't know the man!" After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away." Then he began to call down curses, and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!" Immediately a rooster crowed. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.* (Matthew 26:69-75)
- The death of Judas. *When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. "I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood." "What is that to us?" they replied. "That's your responsibility." So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.* (Matthew 27:3-5)
- Trial before Pilate. *Early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people made their plans how to have Jesus exe-*

cuted... they bound him, led him away and handed him over to Pilate the governor… Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "You have said so," Jesus replied... Then Pilate asked him, "Don't you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?" But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge—to the great amazement of the governor. Now it was the governor's custom at the festival to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. At that time, they had a well-known prisoner whose name was Jesus Barabbas. So, when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, "Which one do you want me to release to you: Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?" For he knew it was out of self-interest that they had handed Jesus over to him. While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: "Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him." But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed. "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" asked the governor. "Barabbas," they answered. "What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" Pilate asked. They all answered, "Crucify him!" "Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!" When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!" All the people answered, "His blood is on us and on our children!" Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged and handed him over to be crucified. (Matthew 27:1-26)

- *Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. They spit on him and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.* (Matthew 27:27-31)
- The crucifixion.
    - Simon of Cyrene. *As the soldiers led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him…* (Luke 23:26-27)
    - *They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means "the place of the skull"). Then they offered him wine*

mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. And they crucified him. Dividing up his clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get. It was nine in the morning when they crucified him. The written notice of the charge against him read: the King of the Jews. (Mark 15:22-26)

- *Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed... Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." ...The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is God's Messiah, the Chosen One." The soldiers also came up and mocked him... "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself." ...One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."* (Luke 23:32-43)
- Jesus dies. *From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"). When some of those standing there heard this, they said, "He's calling Elijah." Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. The rest said, "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him." And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs after Jesus' resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people. When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, "Surely he was the Son of God!"* (Matthew 27:45-54)

- Jesus' burial. *"It was Preparation Day (that is, the day before the Sabbath). So as evening approached, Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. Pilate was surprised to hear that he was already dead. Summoning the centurion, he asked him if Jesus had already died.*

When he learned from the centurion that it was so, he gave the body to Joseph. So Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where he was laid. (Mark 15:42-47)

- *The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. "Sir," they said, "we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again.' So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first." "Take a guard," Pilate answered. "Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how." So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.* (Matthew 27:62-66)

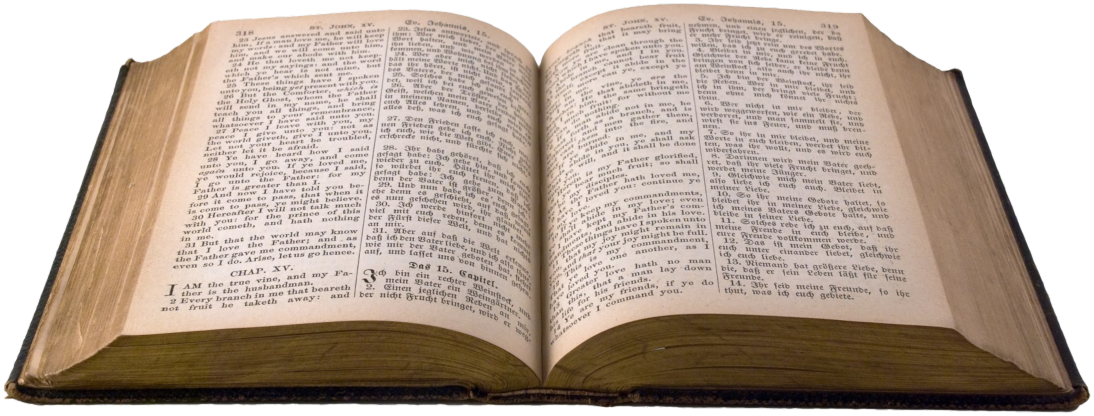
- Resurrection.
  - *After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you." So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me." While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, telling them, "You are to say, 'His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.' If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day.* (Matthew 28:1-15)
  - *When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. But they did not believe the women, because their*

words seemed to them like nonsense. Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened. (Luke 24:9-12)

- Jesus appears to the disciples. *Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognizing him. He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?" They stood still, their faces downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" "What things?" he asked. "About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus." He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight... They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread. While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have." ...He said to them, "This is what I told you*

while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." (Luke 24:13-49)

- The Great Commission. *Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*
- Jesus Ascension. *"When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.* (Luke 24:50-53)



Lesson 28

JOHN

- The Apostle John wrote this version of the Gospel, probably from Ephesus between AD85-95.
    - He was the son of Zebedee and brother of James, as was among the first to follow Jesus (Matthew 4:21-22).
    - James and John were nicknamed *"the sons of thunder"* (Mark 3:17).
    - John pastored the church at Ephesus and was eventually exiled to Patmos.
    - In addition to his Gospel, he wrote three epistles (1 John, 2 John, 3 John), as well as the Book of Revelation.
- Whereas the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke) were mainly concerned with Jesus' life, earthly ministry, and public teachings – his birth, baptism, temptation, transfiguration, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension – John is more concerned with Jesus' divinity – the idea that he is God Incarnate – and his more private conversations and thoughts.

OUTLINE

- Prologue (1:1-18).
    - *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all [humanity]. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it… He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God –children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the father, full of grace and truth.* (vv. 1-8, 10-14)
        - WORD = *logos* (Greek noun): an idea, a thought, a plan, a decree or mandate, doctrine, a promise or guarantee.
        - When, *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters"* (Genesis 1:1-2) is combined with *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made"* (v. 1) the Trinity is pre-existent and eternal, fully involved in creation.

- *Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.* (vv. 16-18)

- Jesus' public ministry (1:19-12:50).
  - John the Baptist's testimony.
    - *There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.* (vv. 6-8)
    - *Now this was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was… "I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord' …I baptize with water… but among you stands one you do not know. He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie."* (1:19, 23, 26-27)
    - *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"* (1:29)
  - Jesus calls disciples to follow him.
    - Andrew and Peter. *The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus… they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him… Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" …And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter).* (1:35-42)
    - Philip and Nathaniel. *The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Follow me." Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote – Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip. When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit." "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you." Then Nathanael declared,*

"Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel." Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that… Very truly I tell you, you will see heaven open, and the 'angels of God ascending and descending on' (cc. Jacob's dream – Genesis 28:12) *the Son of Man."* (1:43-51)

- Jesus' first miracle. *On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." "Woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Nearby stood six stone water jars… each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now." What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.* (2:1-11)
- Jesus clears the Temple. *When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So, he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a market!" …The Jews then responded to him, "What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." They replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?" But the temple he had spoken of was his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.* (2:13-22)
- Jesus and Nicodemus. *Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him." Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless*

they are born again." "How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!" Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So, it is with everyone born of the Spirit." "How can this be?" Nicodemus asked. "You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things? ...I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? ...Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him." For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God. (3:1-21)

- John the Baptist's statement. *An argument developed between some of John's disciples and a certain Jew over the matter of ceremonial washing. They came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan – a the one you testified about – a look, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him." ...John replied, "A person can receive only what is given them from heaven. You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the Messiah but am sent ahead of him.' The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. He must become greater; I must become less."* (3:25-30)
- Jesus and the Samaritan Woman. *[Jesus] left Judea and went back once more to Galilee… he had to go through Samaria. So, he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar… Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" …The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samari-*

tan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" ...Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?" Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water." He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back." "I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true." "Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem." "Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth." The woman said, "I know that Messiah... is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." Then Jesus declared, "I, the one speaking to you—I am he." ...Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?" They came out of the town and made their way toward him... Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony... So, when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. And because of his words many more became believers. They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world." (4:3-26, 28-30, 39 -42)

- Jesus heals the paralyzed man. ….*Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals. Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda... One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get*

well?" "Sir," the invalid replied, "I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me." Then Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked. The day on which this took place was a Sabbath, and so the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat." But he replied, "The man who made me well said to me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.'" So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began to persecute him. ...Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working... the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does... Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son… whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life... By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me... You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life... But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?" (5)

- Jesus feeds the 5,000. *Sometime after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee… and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the signs he had performed by healing the sick. Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples... When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" ...Philip answered him, "It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!" Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?" Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there). Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish. When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted." So, they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten...*

Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself. (6:1-15)

- Jesus, the bread of life. *Jesus [said] "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." So, they asked him, "What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness… Jesus said… "Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world... I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day." At this the Jews there began to grumble about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." They said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven'?" ...Jesus answered. "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day... Very truly I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day... so the one who feeds on me will live because of me... On hearing it, many of his disciples said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" ...From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve. Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God."* (6:28-69)
- The woman caught in adultery. *At dawn [Jesus] appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. The teachers of the law and the*

Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." Again, he stooped down and wrote on the ground. At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin." (8:2-11)

- Disputes over who Jesus is. *When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." The Pharisees challenged him, "Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid." Jesus answered, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going. You judge by human standards… In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is true. I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me." Then they asked him, "Where is your father?" ...Jesus replied. "If you knew me, you would know my Father also." ...Once more Jesus said to them, "I am going away, and you will look for me, and you will die in your sin. Where I go, you cannot come... You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am he, you will indeed die in your sins." "Who are you?" they asked. "Just what I have been telling you from the beginning," Jesus replied. "I have much to say in judgment of you. But he who sent me is trustworthy, and what I have heard from him I tell the world… When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him." Even as he spoke, many believed in him. To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?" Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin... So, if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. I know that*

you are Abraham's descendants. Yet you are looking for a way to kill me, because you have no room for my word... If you were Abraham's children… then you would do what Abraham did. As it is, you are looking for a way to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God... "We are not illegitimate children," they protested. "The only Father we have is God himself." Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I have come here from God. I have not come on my own; God sent me... You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires... Whoever belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God." The Jews answered… "Now we know that you are demon-possessed! Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that whoever obeys your word will never taste death. Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?" Jesus replied, "If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me. Though you do not know him, I know him... Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad." "You are not yet fifty years old," they said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!" "Very truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds. (8:12-59)

- Jesus heals a blind man. *As [Jesus] went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam." …So, the man went and washed, and came home seeing... They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. Therefore, the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. "He put mud on my eyes," the man replied, "and I washed, and now I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others asked, "How can a sinner perform such signs?" So, they were divided... They still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents. "Is this your son?" they asked. "Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?" "We know he is our son," the parents answered, "and we know he was born blind. But how he can see*

now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who already had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue... A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. "Give glory to God by telling the truth," they said. "We know this man is a sinner." He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!" ...Then they hurled insults at him and said, "You are this fellow's disciple! We are disciples of Moses! We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know where he comes from... And they threw him out. Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" "Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me so that I may believe in him." Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you." Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him. Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind." Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, "What? Are we blind too?" Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains. Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger… I am the gate for the sheep. All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep... I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me – just as the Father knows me and I know the Father – and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life – only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father." The Jews who heard these words were again divided. Many of them said, "He is demon-possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him?" But others said,

"These are not the sayings of a man possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?" (9:1-10:21)

- Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. *Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. (This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) So, the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick." When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So, when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, and then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea." "But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?" Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world's light. It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light... Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up." His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better." Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep. So, then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." Then Thomas… said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days... many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home. "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?" "Yes, Lord," she replied, "I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world." After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. "The Teacher is here," she said, "and is asking for you." When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him... When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. "Where have you laid him?" he asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied. Jesus wept... Jesus, once more deeply*

moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. "Take away the stone," he said. "But, Lord," said Martha… "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days." Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" So, they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me." When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go." Therefore, many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him. But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin. "What are we accomplishing?" they asked. "Here is this man performing many signs. If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our temple and our nation." Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, "You know nothing at all! You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish." (11:1-50)

- Passion Week (12-19)
    - The Saturday before Passion Week begins. *Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived… a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, "Why wasn't this perfume sold, and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages." He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it. "Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me." Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and believing in him.* (12:1-11)

- Palm Sunday. *The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the king of Israel!" Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it… Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word. Many people, because they had heard that he had performed this sign, went out to meet him. So, the Pharisees said to one another, "See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!"* (12:12-19)
- Jesus washes his disciple's feet. *It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so, he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." For he knew who was going to betray him… When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you… I tell you, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me."*
- Jesus confronts Judas Iscariot. *After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, "Very truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray me." His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, "Ask him which one he means." Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when*

I have dipped it in the dish." Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot. As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. So, Jesus told him, "What you are about to do, do quickly." ...As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out... When he was gone, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself…

- Jesus teaches his disciples. *"My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come. A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." Simon Peter asked him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus replied, "Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later." Peter asked, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." Then Jesus answered, "Will you really lay down your life for me? Very truly I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times! Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me... Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? ...Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever – the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in*

me, and I am in you. Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me... Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, "But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?" Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching... All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid... I will not say much more to you, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold over me, but he comes so that the world may learn that I love the Father and do exactly what my Father has commanded me. Come now; let us leave. (13-14)

- Gethsemane.
    - Jesus teaches his disciples on the way to Gethsemane. *"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit – fruit that will last – and so that whatever you ask in my name the*

Father will give you. This is my command: Love each other. If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world… If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also… When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father – the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father – he will testify about me. And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning. All this I have told you so that you will not fall away... I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment… I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth... In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me." …Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to them, "Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, 'In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me'? Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy... Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. In that day you will no longer ask me anything... A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me. "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (15-16)

- Jesus prays. *After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world… They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. I pray for them... I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave*

me, so that they may be one as we are one... I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one... My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me, and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one – I in them and you in me – so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me... Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them." (17)

- Jesus is arrested. *When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was a garden, and he and his disciples went into it. Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. So, Judas came to the garden, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons. Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, "Who is it you want?" "Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "I am he," Jesus said... they drew back and fell to the ground. Again, he asked them, "Who is it you want?" "Jesus of Nazareth," they said. Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. If you are looking for me, then let these men go." ...Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) Jesus commanded Peter, "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?" Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They bound him and brought him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year... Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus... The other disciple, who was known to the high priest, came back, spoke to the servant girl on duty there and brought Peter in. "You aren't one of this man's disciples too, are you?" she asked Peter. He replied, "I am not." It was cold, and the servants and officials stood around a fire they had made to keep warm. Peter also was standing with them,*

warming himself. Meanwhile, the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. "I have spoken openly to the world," Jesus replied. "I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret. Why question me? Ask those who heard me. Surely, they know what I said." When Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby slapped him in the face. "Is this the way you answer the high priest?" he demanded. "If I said something wrong," Jesus replied, "testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?" Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest. Meanwhile, Simon Peter was still standing there warming himself. So, they asked him, "You aren't one of his disciples too, are you?" He denied it, saying, "I am not." One of the high priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him, "Didn't I see you with him in the garden?" Again, Peter denied it, and at that moment a rooster began to crow. (18:1-27)

- Jesus Trial. *Then the Jewish leaders took Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor... Pilate came out to them and asked, "What charges are you bringing against this man?" "If he were not a criminal," they replied, "we would not have handed him over to you." Pilate said, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law." "But we have no right to execute anyone," they objected... Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?" "Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?" Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place." "You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." "What is truth?" retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, "I find no basis for a charge against him. But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release 'the king of the Jews'?" They shouted back, "No, not him! Give us Barabbas!" Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising. Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe and went up to him again and again, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they slapped him in the face. Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there, "Look, I am bringing him out to*

you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him." When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!" But Pilate answered, "You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him." The Jewish leaders insisted, "We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God." When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, and he went back inside the palace. "Where do you come from?" he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer. "Do you refuse to speak to me?" Pilate said. "Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?" Jesus answered, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore, the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin." From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jewish leaders kept shouting, "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar." When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge's seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement… "Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews. But they shouted, "Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!" "Shall I crucify your king?" Pilate asked. "We have no king but Caesar," the chief priests answered. (18:28-19:15)

- The Crucifixion. *Finally, Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. So, the soldiers took charge of Jesus. Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). There they crucified him, and with him two others – one on each side and Jesus in the middle. Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: Jesus of Nazareth, The King of the Jews... The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate… Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written." When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. "Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it." ...Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother… When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Be-*

cause the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water… Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there. (19:16-42)

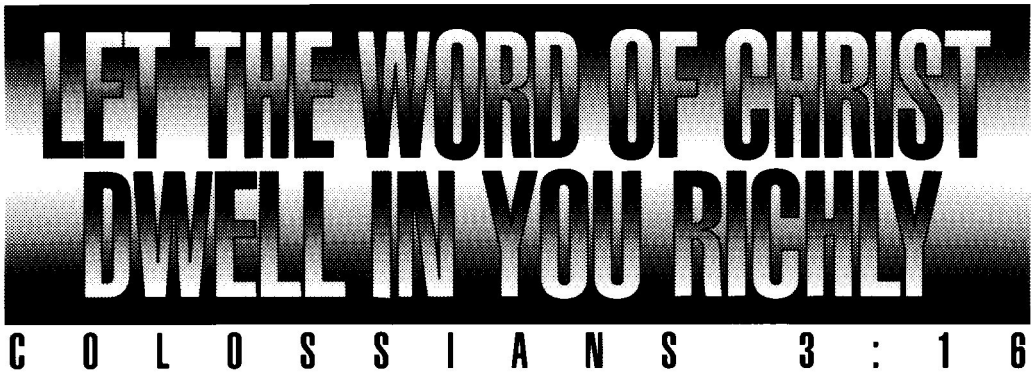
- The Resurrection. (20-21)
    - The empty tomb. *Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So, she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!" So, Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. Finally, the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed... Then the disciples went back to where they were staying. Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher"). Jesus said, "Do*

not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

- Jesus appears to his disciples. *On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again, Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."* (20:1-21)
- Thomas. *Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So, the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."* (20:24-29)
- Jesus restores Peter. *Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. "I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you." So, they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered. He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards. When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught." So, Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net*

ashore. It was full of large fish… Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish... Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." Again, Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep. Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, "Follow me!" Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them… When Peter saw him, he asked, "Lord, what about him?" Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me." (21:1-23)

- Final words. *This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true. Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.* (21:24-25)



LESSON 29

ACTS

- Luke, the writer of the third Gospel is also the author of Acts.
- Both books are addressed to Theophilus.
- Acts was written sometime after the Ascension of Jesus (about 32AD), but before 64AD because it omits three important historical events:
    - The Great Fire in Rome (64AD)
    - The death of Paul (68AD).
    - The destruction of Jerusalem (70AD).
- The book of Acts divides into two major parts:
    - The Church in Jerusalem under the leadership of Peter. (1-
    - Church expansion based from Antioch under the leadership of Paul.

OUTLINE

- In Jerusalem (1:1–8:3)
    - The beginning of the Christian Church.
        - Jesus' last days on earth.

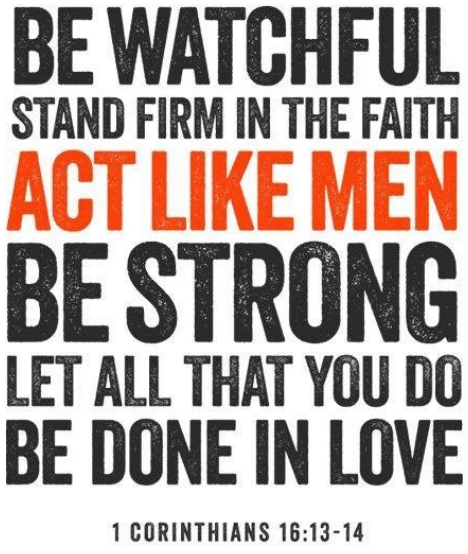
        In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit… It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven." (1:1-11)
            - We have no idea who Theophilus was, but Luke addressed this book and his Gospel account to him.
            - Jesus spent over 40 days on the earth after his resurrection,

    - He told the 11 Apostles to stay in Jerusalem and wait for the Holy Spirit to come.
    - Key verse: *"you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth"* (1:8).
- Matthias replaces Judas.
  Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem… When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James (aka Thaddeus). They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women (Luke 8:2 - Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, and many others) and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers... Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty) and said, "Brothers and sisters, the Scripture had to be fulfilled in which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus. He was one of our number and shared in our ministry… Therefore, it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among us, beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection. So, they nominated two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs." Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles. (1:12-26)
- Pentecost.
  When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken... Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine." Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed

the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams… And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'…When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit..." With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. (2:1-41)

- The day of Pentecost is part of Shavout, the Feast of Weeks on the Jewish calendar - a celebration of the giving of the Torah.
- It is important to note the Holy Spirit has always been here and Jesus' followers received him when they accepted Jesus just as we do. However, this was the moment the Holy Spirit empowered the Church that Jesus established (Matthew 16:18) for the work he gave us (Matthew 28:18-20).
- It is also important to note the followers of Jesus spoke in other tongues so that everyone could understand what was being said in their own language. This manifestation of the Holy Spirit was given to enable communication so that the Gospel could be spoken and understood by everyone there.
- Peter gave the first sermon in the history of the Church and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

- The fellowship of Believers.
  They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. (2:42-47)
  - The early Church was devoted to:
    - *the apostles' teaching* - the word of God, the Bible.
    - *fellowship* - the local church.
    - *the breaking of bread* - worship.
    - *prayer.*
  - The results of their devotion were:
    - Unity - *all the believers were together and had everything in common.*
    - Benevolence - *they sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.*
    - Reputation - *enjoying the favor of all the people.*
    - Growth - *the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*



- The Church under Peter's leadership.
  - Healing a lame beggar.
    One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, "Look at us!" So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. When all the people saw him walking and praising God, they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. (3:1-10)
  - Peter preaches again.
    ...Peter… said to them: "Fellow Israelites… The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this... I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders... Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord…" (3:11-26)
  - Peter and John arrested by the Sanhedrin.
    The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people, proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. They seized Peter and John and, because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. But many who heard the message believed; so the number of men who believed grew to about five thousand. The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others of the high priest's family. They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or

what name did you do this?" Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. Jesus is " 'the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.' Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved." When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. "What are we going to do with these men?" they asked. "Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a notable sign, and we cannot deny it. But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name." Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, "Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard." After further threats they let them go. (4:1-21)

- Peter and John spent the night in jail.
    - *The Sanhedrin convened the next morning but were unable to punish Peter and John because the man who had been healed [was] standing there with them. So, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus and let them go...*
    - *On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God... After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.* (4:23-31)
- Corruption enters the Church.
    - *All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerful-*

ly at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need. Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"), sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet. (4:32-36)

- *Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet. Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings but to God." When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. Then some young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him. About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. Peter asked her, "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?" "Yes," she said, "that is the price." Peter said to her, "How could you conspire to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also." At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband.* (5:1-10)

- Persecution.

Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. "Go, stand in the temple courts," he said, "and tell the people all about this new life." At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people. When the high priest and his associates arrived, they called together the Sanhedrin—the full assembly of the elders of Israel—and sent to the jail for the apostles. But on arriving at the

jail, the officers did not find them there... Then someone came and said, "Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts teaching the people." At that, the captain went with his officers and brought the apostles. They did not use force, because they feared that the people would stone them. The apostles were brought in and made to appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name," he said. "Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood." Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than human beings! The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead—whom you killed by hanging him on a cross. God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins. We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him." When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death. But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law… addressed the Sanhedrin: "Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men... I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God." ...They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah. (5:17-42)

- The first deacons.
  In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables… choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles, who

prayed and laid their hands on them. So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith. (6:1-7)

- Stephen.
  Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people. Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called) — Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia — who began to argue with Stephen. But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke... they secretly persuaded some men to say, "We have heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God." ...They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin. They produced [the] false witnesses… Then the high priest asked Stephen, "Are these charges true?" To this he replied (after a lengthy history lesson): "You stiff-necked people! ...You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him — you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it." When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep. And Saul approved of their killing him. On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria... Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison (6:8-8:3)

- The Church moves out from Jerusalem.
    - Phillip.
        - *Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there. When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said. For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. So there was great joy in that city.* (8:4-8)
        - *Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road — the desert road — that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means "queen of the Ethiopians"). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it." Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked. "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading: "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth* (Isaiah 53:7-8)*." The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?" And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.* (8:26-40)
    - The conversion of Saul/Paul
        - *Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. As*

he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything. In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered. The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight." "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name." But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles..." Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength. Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. (9:1-19)

- *At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. All those who heard him were astonished and asked, "Isn't he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn't he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?" Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Messiah. After many days had gone by, there was a conspiracy among the Jews to kill him, but Saul learned of their plan... his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall. When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had*

preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. He talked and debated with the Hellenistic Jews, but they tried to kill him. When the believers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus. (9:20-30)

- Peter.
    - Two miracles.
        - *As Peter traveled about the country, he went to visit the Lord's people who lived in Lydda. There he found a man named Aeneas, who was paralyzed and had been bedridden for eight years. "Aeneas," Peter said to him, "Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and roll up your mat." Immediately Aeneas got up. All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.* (9:32-35)
        - *In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she was always doing good and helping the poor. About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room... when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, "Please come at once!" Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them. Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called for the believers, especially the widows, and presented her to them alive. This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord.* (9:36-42)
    - Cornelius sends for Peter.
        - *At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!" Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked. The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a me-*

morial offering before God. Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter...” Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants. He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa. (10:1-8)

- *About noon the following day… Peter went up on the roof to pray. He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. Then a voice told him, “Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.” “Surely not, Lord!” Peter replied. “I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.” The voice spoke to him a second time, “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.” This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven... While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Simon, three men are looking for you. So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.” ...Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests. The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the believers from Joppa went along.* (10:9-23)
- *The following day he arrived in Caesarea... As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. But Peter made him get up. “Stand up,” he said, “I am only a man myself.” ...Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. He said to them: “You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean... May I ask why you sent for me?” Cornelius answered: “Three days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me and said, ‘Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter... So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us.” Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right...”*

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message... Then Peter said, "Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days. (10:24-48)

- Peter is challenged by Jewish Christians.
  The apostles and the believers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him and said, "You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them." Starting from the beginning, Peter told them the whole story… When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life." (11:1-18)
- Persecution increases.
  It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church… He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. When he saw that this met with approval among the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also… After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover. So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him. The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists. Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." And Peter did so. "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me," the angel told him. Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him... he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying. Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant named Rhoda came to answer the door. When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so over-

joyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, "Peter is at the door!" "You're out of your mind," they told her... But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished... In the morning, there was no small commotion among the soldiers as to what had become of Peter. After Herod had a thorough search made for him and did not find him, he cross-examined the guards and ordered that they be executed. Then Herod went from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there. (12:1-19)

- Paul's First missionary journey.
  - The Antioch church grows.
    Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word only among Jews. Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord. Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch... The disciples, as each one was able, decided to provide help for the brothers and sisters living in Judea. This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul. (11:19-30)
  - Paul and Barnabas commissioned at Antioch.
    When Barnabas and Saul had finished their mission, they returned from Jerusalem, taking with them John, also called Mark. Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. (12:25-13:3)
  - Cyprus.
    The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their helper. They traveled through the whole island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jew-

ish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, who was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer… opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, "You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind for a time, not even able to see the light of the sun." Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand. When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord. (13:4-12)

- Pamphylia

  ...Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem. From Perga they went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue… the leaders of the synagogue sent word to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have a word of exhortation for the people, please speak." Standing up, Paul motioned with his hand and said: "Fellow Israelites and you Gentiles who worship God, listen to me! The God of the people of Israel ...made the people prosper during their stay in Egypt; with mighty power he led them out of that country; for about forty years he endured their conduct in the wilderness; and he overthrew seven nations in Canaan, giving their land to his people as their inheritance… After this, God gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet. Then the people asked for a king, and he gave them Saul son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, who ruled forty years. After removing Saul, he made David their king… From this man's descendants God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus, as he promised... it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent... God raised him from the dead, and for many days he was seen by those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to our people. "We tell you the good news: What God promised our ancestors he has fulfilled for us… Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin… As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath… On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy. They began to contradict what Paul was saying and heaped abuse on him. Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: "We had to speak the word of

God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles..." When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord… The word of the Lord spread through the whole region. But the Jewish leaders… stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. So they shook the dust off their feet as a warning to them and went to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. (13:13-52)

- Iconium.
  At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Greeks believed. But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the other Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to perform signs and wonders. The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles. There was a plot afoot among both Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders, to mistreat them and stone them. But they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding country, where they continued to preach the gospel. (14:1-7)
- Lystra and Derbe.
  In Lystra there sat a man who was lame. He had been that way from birth and had never walked... Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed and called out, "Stand up on your feet!" At that, the man jumped up and began to walk. When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted… "The gods have come down to us in human form!" Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes… The priest of Zeus… brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates because he and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them. But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting: "Friends, why are you doing this? We too are only human, like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God…" Even with these words, they had difficulty keeping the crowd from sacrificing to them. Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead. But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe. (14:8-20)
- Back to Antioch.
  They preached the gospel in that city (Derbe) and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to re-

main true to the faith… Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust. After going through Pisidia, they came into Pamphylia, and when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. And they stayed there a long time with the disciples. (14:21-28)

- The Council at Jerusalem
    - *Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved." This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question... When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them. Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, "The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses." The apostles and elders met to consider this question. After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: "Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are." The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. When they finished, James spoke up. "Brothers," he said, "listen to me. Simon has described to us how God first intervened to choose a people for his name from the Gentiles. The words of the prophets are in agreement with this… It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood. For the law of Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath."* (15:1-21)

- *Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas... With them they sent the following letter: "The apostles and elders, your brothers, To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia: Greetings. We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said. So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul… It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things. Farewell." So the men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and delivered the letter. The people read it and were glad for its encouraging message... Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, where they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord.* (15:22-35)

- Paul's second missionary Journey.
  - A dispute divides Paul and Barnabas.
    Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing." Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord. (15:36-40)
  - Timothy joins Paul and Silas.
    Paul came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was Jewish and a believer but whose father was a Greek. The believers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. Paul wanted to take him along on the journey… As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers. (16:1-5)
  - Macedonia
    - *Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." Af-*

ter Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them. (16:6-10)

- *From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on to Neapolis. From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days. On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.* (16:11-15)
- *Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her. When her owners realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities… the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten with rods. After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully... he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose. The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!" The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." Then they spoke the word of the*

Lord to him and to all the others in his house... the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God… When it was daylight, the magistrates sent their officers to the jailer with the order: "Release those men." ...But Paul said to the officers: "They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out." The officers reported this to the magistrates, and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were alarmed. They came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, requesting them to leave the city. After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia's house, where they met with the brothers and sisters and encouraged them. Then they left. (16:16-40)

- Thessalonica.
  When Paul and his companions had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue... Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead... Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women. But other Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas… when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other believers before the city officials… they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go. As soon as it was night, the believers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue... they received the message with great eagerness… many of them believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men. But when the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, some of them went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up. The believers immediately sent Paul to the coast, but Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea. Those who escorted Paul brought him to Athens and then left with instructions for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible. (17:1-15)
- Athens.
  While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. So he reasoned in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, as well as in

the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to debate with him... they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus… Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: "People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship — and this is what I am going to proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else... 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'...He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead." When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, "We want to hear you again on this subject." At that, Paul left the Council. Some of the people became followers of Paul and believed. (17:16-34)

- Corinth.
  After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. There he met a Jew named Aquila… who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them. Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks. When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah. But when they opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent of it. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized... So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God. While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews of Corinth made a united attack on Paul and brought him to the place of judgment... Gallio said to them, "If you Jews were making a complaint about some misdemeanor or serious crime, it would be reasonable for me to listen to you. But since it involves questions about words and names and your own law — settle the matter yourselves. I will not be a judge of such things." ...Then the crowd there turned on Sosthenes the synagogue leader and beat him in front of the proconsul; and Gallio showed no concern whatever. Paul stayed on in Corinth for some

time. Then he left the brothers and sisters and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila… They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. He himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. When they asked him to spend more time with them, he declined. But as he left, he promised, "I will come back if it is God's will." Then he set sail from Ephesus. When he landed at Caesarea, he went up to Jerusalem and greeted the church and then went down to Antioch. After spending some time in Antioch, Paul set out from there and traveled from place to place throughout the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples. (18:1-23)

- Paul's third missionary journey.
    - Apollos.
      Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately… When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately. When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia, the brothers and sisters encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. When he arrived, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed. For he vigorously refuted his Jewish opponents in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah. (18:24-28)



- Ephesus
    - *Paul… arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus... There were about twelve men in all. Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord... Paul decided to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. "After I have been there," he said, "I must visit Rome also." He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer.* (19:1-22)
    - *A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in a lot of business for the craftsmen there. He called them together, along with the workers in related trades, and said: "You know, my friends, that we receive a good income from this business. And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that gods made by human hands are no gods at all. There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited; and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty." ...The people seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia… Paul wanted to appear before the crowd, but the disciples would not let him... The city clerk quieted the crowd and said: "Fellow Ephesians, doesn't all the world know that the city of Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image, which fell from heaven? Therefore, since these facts are undeniable, you ought to calm down and not do anything rash. You have brought these men here, though they have neither robbed temples nor blasphemed our goddess. If, then, Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a*

grievance against anybody, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. They can press charges. If there is anything further you want to bring up, it must be settled in a legal assembly. As it is, we are in danger of being charged with rioting because of what happened today... After he had said this, he dismissed the assembly. When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples and, after encouraging them, said goodbye and set out for Macedonia. (19:23-20:1)

- Macedonia
    - *On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight. There were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting. Seated in a window was a young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. When he was sound asleep, he fell to the ground from the third story and was picked up dead. Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. "Don't be alarmed," he said. "He's alive!" Then he went upstairs again and broke bread and ate. After talking until daylight, he left. The people took the young man home alive and were greatly comforted.* (20:7-12)
    - Farewell to the Ephesians.
      We went on ahead to the ship and sailed for Assos, where we were going to take Paul aboard… When he met us at Assos, we took him aboard and went on to Mitylene. The next day we set sail from there and arrived off Chios. The day after that we crossed over to Samos, and on the following day arrived at Miletus... From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. When they arrived, he said to them: "You know how I lived the whole time I was with you… I served the Lord with great humility and with tears and in the midst of severe testing by the plots of my Jewish opponents. You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus. And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that… the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me — the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace... Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own

blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard! ...When Paul had finished speaking, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him. What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship. (20:13-38)

- Paul's arrest in Jerusalem.
  ...we put out to sea and sailed straight to Kos. The next day we went to Rhodes and from there to Patara. We found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, went on board and set sail... We landed at Tyre, where our ship was to unload its cargo. We sought out the disciples there and stayed with them seven days. Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem... All of them, including wives and children, accompanied us out of the city, and there on the beach we knelt to pray... We continued our voyage from Tyre and landed at Ptolemais, where we greeted the brothers and sisters and stayed with them for a day. Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven... After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea… he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'" ...the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem... When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, "The Lord's will be done." After this, we started on our way up to Jerusalem... When we arrived at Jerusalem, the brothers and sisters received us warmly. The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James, and all the elders were present. Paul greeted them and reported in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. When they heard this, they praised God. Then they said to Paul: "You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the law. They have been informed that you teach all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn away from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or live according to our customs. What shall we do? They will certainly hear that you have come, so do what we tell you. There are four men with us who have made a vow. Take these men, join in their purification rites and pay their expenses, so that they can have their heads shaved. Then everyone will know there is no truth in these reports about you, but that you yourself are living in obedience to the law. As for the Gentile believers, we have written to them our decision that they should abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of

strangled animals and from sexual immorality." The next day Paul took the men and purified himself along with them. Then he went to the temple to give notice of the date when the days of purification would end and the offering would be made for each of them. When the seven days were nearly over, some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd and seized him, shouting, "Fellow Israelites, help us! This is the man who teaches everyone everywhere against our people and our law and this place. And besides, he has brought Greeks into the temple and defiled this holy place." (They had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with Paul and assumed that Paul had brought him into the temple.) The whole city was aroused, and the people came running from all directions. Seizing Paul, they dragged him from the temple, and immediately the gates were shut. While they were trying to kill him, news reached the commander of the Roman troops that the whole city of Jerusalem was in an uproar. He at once took some officers and soldiers and ran down to the crowd. When the rioters saw the commander and his soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. The commander came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. Then he asked who he was and what he had done. Some in the crowd shouted one thing and some another, and since the commander could not get at the truth because of the uproar, he ordered that Paul be taken into the barracks. When Paul reached the steps, the violence of the mob was so great he had to be carried by the soldiers... He directed that [Paul] be flogged and interrogated in order to find out why the people were shouting at him like this. As they stretched him out to flog him, Paul said to the centurion standing there, "Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who hasn't even been found guilty?" When the centurion heard this, he went to the commander and reported it. "What are you going to do?" he asked. "This man is a Roman citizen." ...Those who were about to interrogate him withdrew immediately. The commander himself was alarmed when he realized that he had put Paul, a Roman citizen, in chains. (21:1-22:29)

- Paul's Trial before Felix.
    - *...some Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. More than forty men were involved in this plot. They went to the chief priests and the elders and said, "...Now then, you and the Sanhedrin petition the commander to bring him before you on the pretext of wanting more accurate information about his case. We are ready to kill him before he gets here." But when the son of Paul's sister heard of this plot, he went into the barracks and told Paul. Then Paul called one of the centurions and said, "Take this young man to the commander; he has something to tell him." So*

he took him to the commander… Then he called two of his centurions and ordered them, "Get ready a detachment of two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at nine tonight. Provide horses for Paul so that he may be taken safely to Governor Felix." (23:12-24)

- *Five days later the high priest Ananias went down to Caesarea with some of the elders and a lawyer named Tertullus, and they brought their charges against Paul before the governor... When the governor motioned for him to speak, Paul replied: "I know that for a number of years you have been a judge over this nation; so I gladly make my defense. You can easily verify that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship. My accusers did not find me arguing with anyone at the temple, or stirring up a crowd in the synagogues or anywhere else in the city. And they cannot prove to you the charges they are now making against me. However, I admit that I worship the God of our ancestors as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets, and I have the same hope in God as these men themselves have, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked... It is concerning the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today." Then Felix, who was well acquainted with the Way, adjourned the proceedings. "When Lysias the commander comes," he said, "I will decide your case." He ordered the centurion to keep Paul under guard but to give him some freedom and permit his friends to take care of his needs... When two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, but because Felix wanted to grant a favor to the Jews, he left Paul in prison.* (24:1-27)

- Paul's trial before Festus.
  Three days after arriving in the province, Festus went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem, where the chief priests and the Jewish leaders appeared before him and presented the charges against Paul. They requested Festus, as a favor to them, to have Paul transferred to Jerusalem, for they were preparing an ambush to kill him along the way. Festus answered, "Paul is being held at Caesarea, and I myself am going there soon. Let some of your leaders come with me, and if the man has done anything wrong, they can press charges against him there." After spending eight or ten days with them, Festus went down to Caesarea. The next day he convened the court and ordered that Paul be brought before him… Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, said to Paul, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and stand trial before me there on these charges?" Paul answered: "I am now standing before

Caesar's court, where I ought to be tried… I appeal to Caesar!" After Festus had conferred with his council, he declared: "You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you will go!" (25:1-12)

- Paul's trial before Caesar Agrippa
  A few days later King Agrippa… arrived at Caesarea to pay their respects to Festus... Festus discussed Paul's case with the king... Then Agrippa said to Festus, "I would like to hear this man myself." ...The next day Agrippa… came with great pomp and entered the audience room… Paul was brought in... Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself." So Paul motioned with his hand and began his defense: "King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate to stand before you today as I make my defense against all the accusations of the Jews, and especially so because you are well acquainted with all the Jewish customs and controversies... it is because of my hope in what God has promised our ancestors that I am on trial today... I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen… At this point Festus interrupted Paul's defense. "You are out of your mind, Paul!" he shouted. "Your great learning is driving you insane." "I am not insane, most excellent Festus," Paul replied. "What I am saying is true and reasonable. The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him... King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do." Then Agrippa said to Paul, "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?" Paul replied, "Short time or long—I pray to God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains." The king rose, and with him the governor… After they left the room, they began saying to one another, "This man is not doing anything that deserves death or imprisonment." Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar." (25:13-26:32)
- Paul sails for Rome.
  - Shipwreck.
    When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were handed over to a centurion named Julius, who belonged to the Imperial Regiment... The next day we landed at Sidon; and Julius, in kindness to Paul, allowed him to go to his friends so they might provide for his needs. From there we put out to sea again… we landed at Myra in Lycia. There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy and put us on board... We made slow headway for many days… We moved along the coast with difficulty and came to a place called Fair Havens, near the town of Lasea. Much time had been lost… Paul warned them, "Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo,

and to our own lives also." But the centurion, instead of listening to what Paul said, followed the advice of the pilot and of the owner of the ship. Since the harbor was unsuitable to winter in, the majority decided that we should sail on… When a gentle south wind began to blow, they saw their opportunity; so they weighed anchor and sailed along the shore of Crete. Before very long, a wind of hurricane force, called the Northeaster, swept down from the island. The ship was caught by the storm and could not head into the wind; so we gave way to it and were driven along... we were hardly able to make the lifeboat secure, so the men hoisted it aboard. Then they passed ropes under the ship itself to hold it together... We took such a violent battering from the storm that the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard... When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved... Altogether there were 276 of us on board... When daylight came, they did not recognize the land, but they saw a bay with a sandy beach, where they decided to run the ship aground if they could. Cutting loose the anchors, they left them in the sea and at the same time untied the ropes that held the rudders. Then they hoisted the foresail to the wind and made for the beach. But the ship struck a sandbar and ran aground... The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to prevent any of them from swimming away and escaping. But the centurion wanted to spare Paul's life and kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land... Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta. The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold. Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand. When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, "This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, the goddess Justice has not allowed him to live." But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects... There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and showed us generous hospitality for three days. His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him. When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured. They honored us in many ways; and when we were ready to sail, they furnished us with the supplies we needed. (27:1-28:10)

- Paul's arrival at Rome.
  After three months we put out to sea in a ship that had wintered in the island — it was an Alexandrian ship… We put in at Syracuse and stayed there three days. From there we set sail and arrived at Rhegium. The next day the south wind came up, and on the following day we reached Puteoli. There we found some brothers and sisters who invited us to spend a week with them. And so we came to Rome. The brothers and sisters there had heard that we were coming, and they traveled as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us. At the sight of these people Paul thanked God and was encouraged. When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him. Three days later he called together the local Jewish leaders... Paul said to them: "My brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. They examined me and wanted to release me, because I was not guilty of any crime deserving death. The Jews objected, so I was compelled to make an appeal to Caesar... It is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain." They replied, "We have not received any letters from Judea concerning you, and none of our people who have come from there has reported or said anything bad about you. But we want to hear what your views are, for we know that people everywhere are talking against this sect." They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. He witnessed to them from morning till evening, explaining about the kingdom of God, and from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets he tried to persuade them about Jesus. Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe... For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance! (28:11-31)

Lesson 30

JAMES

- Written about 50AD by James, the brother of Jesus.
- James was an unbeliever until after Jesus' Resurrection.
- James became one of the early leaders of the Christian church in Jerusalem. Paul consulted with him (Galatians 1:19).
- James became the pastor of the church at Jerusalem (Acts 12:17; Acts 15:13) and presided over the first Jerusalem conference (Acts 15).
- James wrote this letter to Hebrew Christians throughout the Roman Empire.
- The Central Message *"Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves"* (James 1:22).

OUTLINE

- **The Testing of Faith (1)**
    - The letter is addressed to *"the twelve tribes scattered among the nations"* (v. 1) - aka Hebrew Christians throughout the Roman Empire.
    - Rejoicing even in trials.
        - *"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything"* (vv. 2-4).
            - JOY = chara (Greek noun): cheerfulness, calm delight, peacefully content.
            - When our faith is tested it gets stronger and produces PERSEVERANCE = hypomonē (Greek noun): hopefulness, endurance, patience, strength, trust.
            - Perseverance makes the follower of Christ mature and complete in the faith.
    - *"If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do"* (vv. 5-8).
        - When a follower of Christ lacks wisdom - is confused, not knowing what to do - they should ask God and he will give direction.
        - However, the follower of Christ must believe and not doubt.
        - A person who lacks the faith to follow God's direction is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

- Dealing with temptation.
    - KEY VERSE: *"Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him"* (v. 12).
    - *"When tempted, no one should say, 'God is tempting me.' For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death"* (vv. 13-25).
        - God never tempts anyone to sin - that is the devil.
        - Temptation gives birth to sin, which gives birth to death.
    - Proactive resistance:
        - Emotional control. *"My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires"* (v. 19).
        - Biblical application. *"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do"* (vv. 22-25).
        - Verbal control. *"Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless"* (v. 26).
        - Religious practice. *"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world"* (v. 27).

- **Faith and Works (2)**
  - Respect everyone.
    - *"My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism"* (v. 1).
    - *"If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, 'Love your neighbor as yourself,' you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it"* (vv. 8-10).
    - *"Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment"* (vv. 12-13).
  - KEY PASSAGE: *"What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead... You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder... As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead"* (vv, 14-26).
- **Control of the Tongue (3)**
  - NOTE: This is the second time James has covered this topic - it must be important. Remember, *"Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless"* (1:26).
  - Teaching in the church. *"Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly"* (v. 1).
  - Be careful with words.
    - *"We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check"* (v. 2).
    - *"...the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell... It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison"* (vv. 5-8).
    - *"With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be"* (vv. 9-10).

- Wisdom with words (and other things). *"Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such 'wisdom' does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness"* (vv. 13-18).

- **Submission to God (4)**
  - Division is caused by a lack of submission to God. *"What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God... That is why Scripture says: 'God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble* (Proverbs 3:34)'" (vv. 1-6)
  - KEY PASSAGE: *"Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up"* (vv. 7-10)
  - Slander and boasting. *"Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against a brother or sister or judges them speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor? ...Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes... As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil. If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them"* (vv. 11-17).

- **Patient and Expectant Faith (5)**
  - *"Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near"* (vv. 8-9).
  - *"Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door! ...As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered... The Lord is full of compassion and mercy"* (vv. 10-11).
  - *"Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. All you need to say is a simple 'Yes' or 'No.' Otherwise you will be condemned"* (v. 12).



Lesson 31

1ST THESSALONIANS

- The first letter to the Thessalonian Church was written by the Apostle Paul from Corinth about 53AD.
- From Acts 17:1-14 we learn Paul went to Thessalonica during his second missionary journey. Silas and Timothy were with him and they stayed about six months.
- Thessalonica was an important port city of about 200,000 people that was located on the Egnatian Way, the main road from Rome to Byzantium (modern day Istanbul).
    - Paul preached in the synagogue and, *"Some of the Jews were persuaded…"* along with *"a number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women"* (Acts 17:4)
    - Paul was forced to flee the city because some of the Jewish leaders, *"started a riot"* (Acts 17:5).
    - The Central Message: *"I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (5:23).

OUTLINE

- Greeting (1).
    - *"Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace to you"* (v. 1).
    - Affirmation. *"We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ... You became imitators of us and of the Lord… you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia... your faith in God has become known everywhere"* (vv. 2-10).
        - Be grateful for one another.
        - Pray for one another.
        - The motivation for work:
            - faith.
            - love.
            - Jesus.
        - A good reputation.
- Looking back (2-3).
    - *"You know, brothers and sisters, that our visit to you was not without results... with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition... we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well... we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory. And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God… you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe... You suffered from your own people… They displease God and are hostile to everyone in their effort to keep us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved"* (2:1-16).
    - *"...when we were orphaned by being separated from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you. For we*

wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, did, again and again — but Satan blocked our way... So when we could stand it no longer, we thought it best to be left by ourselves in Athens. We sent Timothy, who is our brother and co-worker in God's service in spreading the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith, so that no one would be unsettled by these trials…" (2:17-3:5).

- *"...Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your faith and love. He has told us that you always have pleasant memories of us and that you long to see us, just as we also long to see you. Therefore, brothers and sisters, in all our distress and persecution we were encouraged about you because of your faith… Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you. May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones"* (3:6-13).
    - Timothy returned from Thessalonica with a good report about the church.
        - faith and love.
        - good memories.
    - Paul wants to return to Thessalonica.
    - Paul's hope for the Thessalonians:
        - Increasing love.
        - Strong hearts.
        - blamelessness and holiness.

- Instructions (4-5).
    - Sanctification. *"It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister. The Lord will punish all those who commit such sins, as we told you and warned you before. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God, the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit"* (4:3-8).

- *"Now about your love for one another we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other. And in fact, you do love all of God's family throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, brothers and sisters, to do so more and more, and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody"* (4:9-12).
    - Love one another.
    - Lead a quiet life.
    - Mind your own business.
- The resurrection. *"Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words"* (4:13-18).
- The Day of the Lord. *"Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all children of the light and children of the day... since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ... Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing" (5:1-11).*

- *"Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else"* (5:12-15).
    - Acknowledge those who serve well.
    - Live at peace with each other.
    - Warn those who are disruptive.
    - Be encouraging, helpful, and patient.
    - Strive for the good of everyone.
- *"Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good, reject every kind of evil"* (5:16-22).
- *"May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it"* (5:23-24).

2ND THESSALONIANS

- A few months after Paul had written his first letter to the Thessalonians, he he wrote 2ndThessalonians because he received word that there were those who misunderstood his first letter.
- In addition, there was apparently a forged letter circulating within the church that some claimed was from Paul. The letter claimed the rapture of the church had already occurred because of all the persecution and suffering taking place. This created a great deal of confusion.
- 2nd Thessalonians is stronger in tone than 1st Thessalonians.
- The Central Message *"Stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught"* (2 Thessalonians 2:15).

OUTLINE

- Greeting.
    - Paul used the same greeting as in 1st Thessalonians. *"Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ"* (1:1-2).
    - Encouragement. *"We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love all of you have for one another is increasing. Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring. All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a re-*

sult you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering" (1:3-5).

- Persecution.
  - *"God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled… This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you"* (1:6-10).
  - *"With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith. We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ"* (1:11-12).
- Correction (2).
  - *"Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers and sisters, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly from us—whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter—asserting that the day of the Lord has already come"* (vv. 1-2).
  - *"But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you as firstfruits to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter"* (vv. 13-15).
- Instructions (3).
  - *"In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers and sisters, to keep away from every believer who is idle and disruptive and does not live according to the teaching you received from us…"* (vv. 6-10)
  - *"We hear that some among you are idle and disruptive. They are not busy; they are busybodies. Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down… And as for you, brothers and sisters, never tire of doing what is good"* (vv. 11-13).
  - *"Take special note of anyone who does not obey our instruction in this letter. Do not associate with them, in order that they may feel ashamed. Yet do not regard them as an enemy, but warn them as you would a fellow believer"* (v. 14).

- Blessing. *"Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you. I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand, which is the distinguishing mark in all my letters. This is how I write. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all"* (3:16-18).



LESSON 32

Galatians

- This epistle was written by the Apostle Paul from Antioch about 55AD.
- Galatians was probably written sometime after the events of Acts 15 when Paul and Barnabas traveled to Jerusalem for an important meeting with *"the apostles and elders"* (Acts 15:2) in response to *"believers who belonged to the party orf the Pharisees"* (Acts 15:5) who were teaching those in Antioch, *"Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved"* (Acts 15:1). This Jerusalem Council affirmed the Doctrine of Justification by Faith and accepted the Gentile converts without requiring them to adhere to Jewish Law.
- Despite the decision of the Jerusalem Council, the Judaizers (those who taught adherence to Jewish Law was required for Salvation) were leading Christians in Galatia astray and Paul scolded them, *"I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ"* (Galatians 1:6-7).
- Prior to this writing Paul spent time in Galatia at least twice during his Second Missionary Journey (Acts 16:6) and his Third Missionary Journey (Acts 18:23).
- Paul does not seem at all happy with the Galatians. In fact, he scolds them for being confused by the Judaizers. This is the only time in his writings that he does not express his thankfulness for his readers. There is no word of commendation for the Galatians and no mention of their standing in Christ. No one with him is mentioned by name.
- The Book of Galatians is Paul's strongest declaration of the Doctrine of Justification By Faith.
- KEY VERSE: *"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery"* (Galatians 5:1).

OUTLINE

- INTRODUCTION
    - Salutation. *"Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by a man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—and all the brothers and sisters with me, To the churches in Galatia: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen"* (1:1-5).
        - Background - Paul's authority as an Apostle was being challenged by the same group of Judaizers who were teaching adherence to Jewish Law and he defended his authority from his first words.

        - Paul addressed his readers as, *"the churches in Galatia"* (v. 2). There were multiple churches in the city by this time, all of them probably started by Paul himself.
    - *"I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let them be under God's curse!"* (1:6-9)
        - Paul is obviously upset with the Galatian Christians because they were allowing themselves to be confused by those perverting the Gospel.
        - The phrase, "let them be under God's curse!" (vv. 8, 9) is a big deal, not spoken lightly.
- PAUL DEFENDS HIS MINISTRY
    - His preaching. *"Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ. I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preached is not of human origin. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ"* (1:10-12).
    - His past and conversion. *"For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, my immediate response was not to consult any human being. I did not go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went into Arabia. Later I returned to Damascus"* (1:13-17).
    - His place in the church.
        - *"Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Cephas and stayed with him fifteen days. I saw none of the other apostles—only James, the Lord's brother... Then I went to Syria and Cilicia. I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. They only heard the report: 'The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.' And they praised God because of me"* (1:18-23).
        - *"Then after fourteen years, I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. I went in*

response to a revelation and, meeting privately with those esteemed as leaders, I presented to them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. I wanted to be sure I was not running and had not been running my race in vain" (2:1-2); "...they recognized that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised. For God, who was at work in Peter as an apostle to the circumcised, was also at work in me as an apostle to the Gentiles. James, Cephas and John, those esteemed as pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised. All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along" (2:7-10).

- His confrontation with Peter (Cephas). *"When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of them all, 'You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?'"* (2:11-14)
- KEY VERSE: *"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me"* (2:20).

- PAUL SCOLDS THE GALATIANS. *"You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh? Have you experienced so much in vain—if it really was in vain? So again I ask, does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard?"* (3:1-5)
- THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.
  - It is universal - available to all who receive it. *"So also Abraham 'believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.' Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham. Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: 'All nations will be blessed through you.' So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith"* (3:6-9).

    - Remember, God is not bound by time or space the way humanity is. That is how Christians can be justified by faith along with Abraham.
    - In this sense, *"There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise"* (3:28 -29).
- It fulfills the Law. *"For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.'* (Deuteronomy 27:26) *Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God, because 'the righteous will live by faith.'* (Habakkuk 2:4) *The law is not based on faith… Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us… He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit"* (3:10-14).
    - Remember, Jesus said, *"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven"* (Matthew 5:17-19).
    - However, *"All have turned away, all have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one"* (Psalm 14:3); *"all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23). So, there is no one who keeps the whole Law!
    - Therefore, *"God made him who had no sin (Jesus Christ) to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God"* (2 Corinthians 5:21); *"While we were still sinners Christ died for us"* (Romans 5:8).
    - *"...Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case. The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed... The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise... Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. But Scripture has locked up everything*

under the control of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe" (3:15-22).

- It makes those who are in Christ children of God.
- *"So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise"* (3:26-29).
- *"But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir"* (4:4-7).

- PAUL CONTINUES SCOLDING THE GALATIANS.
  - *"Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. But now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable forces? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you"* (4:8-11).
  - *"Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth?*" (4:16)
  - *"Those people are zealous to win you over, but for no good. What they want is to alienate you from us, so that you may have zeal for them"* (4:17).
  - *"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace"* (5:1-4).
  - *"You were running a good race. Who cut in on you to keep you from obeying the truth? That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. "A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough." I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. The one who is throwing you into confusion, whoever that may be, will have to pay the penalty"* (5:7-10).
- PRACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS
  - *"You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one*

command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other" (5:13-15).

- *"So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law"* (5:16-23).
    - If we walk in the Spirit we will not give in to the flesh - they are opposites, diametrically opposed.
    - The acts of the flesh are obvious - we know what they are! *"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life"* (6:7).
    - The fruit of the Spirit:
        - Love. *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another"* (John 13:34).
        - Joy. *"...the joy of the Lord is your strength"* (Nehemiah 8:10).
        - Peace. *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid"* (John 14:27).
        - Forbearance (patience). *"Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace"* (Ephesians 4:2-3).
        - Kindness. *"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you"* (Ephesians 4:32).
        - Goodness. *"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers"* (Galatians 6:9-10).

        - Faithfulness. *"Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful"* (1 Corinthians 4:2).
        - Gentleness. *"Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and always to be gentle toward everyone"* (Titus 3:2).
        - Self-control. *"Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize"* (1 Corinthians 9:26-27).
    - *"Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted"* (6:1).
    - *"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ"* (6:2).
    - *"If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, for each one should carry their own load"* (6:3-5).
- CLOSING STATEMENT. *"May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is the new creation. Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule… let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers and sisters. Amen"* (6:14-18).

Lesson 33

1st Corinthians

- Written by the Apostle Paul from Ephesus about 51AD in response to a letter Paul received from the Christians in Corinth (1 Corinthians 7:1).
- The city of Corinth was located about 40 miles west of Athens. It was the commercial center of the Roman Empire with three great harbors. It was a city well-known for extreme depravity and materialism.
- Paul founded the church in Corinth during his second missionary journey (Acts 18:1-17).
- It was written specifically to the church in Corinth which was struggling with division and carnality.

OUTLINE

- Introduction (1).
    - Salutation. *Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes, To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.* (1:1-3)
    - Thankfulness. *I always thank my God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in him you have been enriched in every way—with all kinds of speech and with all knowledge—God thus confirming our testimony about Christ among you. Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.* (1:4-9)
- Division in the church (1-2).
    - The cause. *I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought. My brothers and sisters, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ."* (1:10-12)
        - Chloe is probably a wealthy Christian who hosted the church in her home. She may have sent some of her servants to Paul with the letter mentioned in 1 Corinthians 7:1.
        - The church was splintering over allegiances to various teachers.
    - Rhetorical questions. *Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?* (1:13)
    - Paul's rebuke. *I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except*

Crispus and Gaius, so no one can say that you were baptized in my name. (1:14)

- Foolishness of division. *For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God... Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.* (1:18-25)
- Unity in Christ. *Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: "Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord."* (1:26-31)
- Paul's message. *And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power... we declare God's wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began... as it is written: "What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived"— the things God has prepared for those who love him— these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit.* (2:1-9)
- Unity in the Holy Spirit.
    - The Spirit's work. *The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has*

freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. (2:10-13)
    - The Holy Spirit reveals the deep things of God and gives understanding..
    - The Holy Spirit enables spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words to be communicated and understood.
- *The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, for, "Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.* (2:14-16)
    - The *person without the spirit* cannot understand because understanding comes only from *the Spirit of God.*
    - *...the mind of Christ* is given through the Holy Spirit so that Jesus' promise can be fulfilled, *"...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth"* (Acts 1:8)
- Leadership in the church (3-4).
    - Immaturity. *Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans?* (3:1-3).
        - At some point followers of Christ must grow up.
        - Paul was frustrated because the Corinthians were still mere infants in Christ.
        - Their jealousy and quarreling were evidence of their immaturity and worldliness.
    - Servant leadership. *For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere human beings? What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. For we are*

co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building... But each one should build with care. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work. If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames. Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple. (3:4-17)

- Leaders in the church must be *servants… co-workers in God's service.*
    - Jesus taught, *"The greatest among you will be your servant"* (Matthew 23:11) and *"...whoever leads, like the one serving"* (Luke 22:26).
    - *"So Christ himself gave [leaders] to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ"* (Ephesians 4:11-13).
- The *foundation* of the church is Jesus Christ and only God *makes things grow.*
    - Jesus said, *"...I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it"* (Matthew 16:18).
    - Paul wrote, *"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it"* (1 Corinthians 12:27) and, *"...he (Jesus Christ) is the head of the body, the church..."* (Colossians 1:18).
- *...you yourselves are God's temple… If anyone destroyes God's temple, God will destroy that person, for God's temple is sacred.* Therefore, any leader who gets caught up in petty disagreements, competition, or places loyalty above the work of Christ is not fit to serve and will be judged by God.

- *Do not deceive yourselves. If any of you think you are wise by the standards of this age, you should become "fools" so that you may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight… So then, no more boasting about human leaders! All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.* (3:18-23)
- Teachers. *This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of*

Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful… Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart… I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, "Do not go beyond what is written." Then you will not be puffed up in being a follower of one of us over against the other. For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not? (4:1-7)

- Specific teachings and warnings (3-8)
    - Paul's warning. *I am writing this not to shame you but to warn you as my dear children... for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. Therefore I urge you to imitate me. For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church. Some of you have become arrogant, as if I were not coming to you. But I will come to you very soon, if the Lord is willing, and then I will find out not only how these arrogant people are talking, but what power they have. For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power. What do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a rod of discipline, or shall I come in love and with a gentle spirit?* (4:14-21)
    - Sexual immorality.
        - Incest. *It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that even pagans do not tolerate: A man is sleeping with his father's wife. And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have gone into mourning and have put out of your fellowship the man who has been doing this? For my part, even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. As one who is present with you in this way, I have already passed judgment in the name of our Lord Jesus on the one who has been doing this. So when you are assembled and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord.* (5:1-5)
        - *I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister but is sexually immoral*

or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler. Do not even eat with such people. (5:9-11)
    - *What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked person from among you."* (5:12-13)
    - Jump to chapter 6. *"I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but I will not be mastered by anything... The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! ...Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.* (6:12-20)
- Lawsuits. *If any of you has a dispute with another, do you dare to take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the Lord's people? Or do you not know that the Lord's people will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life! Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, do you ask for a ruling from those whose way of life is scorned in the church? I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? But instead, one brother takes another to court—and this in front of unbelievers! The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already… Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers and sisters* (6:1-8)
- Marriage.
    - *Now for the matters you wrote about: "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman." But since sexual immorality is occurring, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband. The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife. Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer.*

Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. I say this as a concession, not as a command. I wish that all of you were as I am. But each of you has your own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that. (7:1-7)

- Paul advocates celibacy for those who choose it for the sake of the Gospel.
- He also advocates sexual purity and complete unity for those who are married.

- *Nevertheless, each person should live as a believer in whatever situation the Lord has assigned to them, just as God has called them. This is the rule I lay down in all the churches. Was a man already circumcised when he was called? He should not become uncircumcised. Was a man uncircumcised when he was called? He should not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing. Keeping God's commands is what counts. Each person should remain in the situation they were in when God called them... Brothers and sisters, each person, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation they were in when God called them.* (7:17-24)
  - Paul is addressing the continuing efforts of the Judaizers to get Gentile converts to submit to Jewish law and tradition.
  - This also applies to the church that insists on the adherence of new converts to church traditions and personal opinions!
- *Because of the present crisis, I think that it is good for a man to remain as he is. Are you pledged to a woman? Do not seek to be released. Are you free from such a commitment? Do not look for a wife. But if you do marry, you have not sinned… But those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this... For this world in its present form is passing away. I would like you to be free from concern... I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.* (7:25-35)
  - Again, remember this letter is addressed specifically to the Corinthian church - a church probably full of bad marriages.
  - Also, remember Paul was in fact married. He had to be because of his place in Jewish culture before his conversion to Christ. Why don't we ever read about Paul's wife? Is it possible he was in a bad marriage, too?
  - The point is, marriage is optional in this life and

there are those who choose to remain celebate for the sake of the Gospel

- Food sacrificed to idols.
    - A bit of wisdom. *We know that "We all possess knowledge." But knowledge puffs up while love builds up. Those who think they know something do not yet know as they ought to know. But whoever loves God is known by God.* (8:1)
    - *So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that "An idol is nothing at all in the world" and that "There is no God but one." For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth… for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live. But not everyone possesses this knowledge. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat sacrificial food they think of it as having been sacrificed to a god, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled. But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do.* (8:4-8)
        - Corinth had a large number of pagan temples in which animals were sacrificed afterwhich the meat was sold in a 'backdoor market.'
        - This was a real problem for some, especially for the Judaizers who considered meat sacrificed to idols 'unclean.'
        - Paul reminded the Corinthians that idols are not gods, therefore could have no effect on the meat.
        - In Paul's view, eating meat sacrificed to idols was inconsequential.
    - *Be careful, however, that the exercise of your rights does not become a stumbling block to the weak. For if someone with a weak conscience sees you, with all your knowledge, eating in an idol's temple, won't that person be emboldened to eat what is sacrificed to idols? So this weak brother or sister, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. When you sin against them in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother or sister to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause them to fall.* (8:9-13)
        - Paul cautioned against anyone allowing their freedom in Christ to become a stumbling block to the weak.
        - In other words, unity in the local church is more important than personal freedom.

        - Jump to chapter 10. *"I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but not everything is constructive. No one should seek their own good, but the good of others. Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience, for, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it." If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising questions of conscience. But if someone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, both for the sake of the one who told you and for the sake of conscience. I am referring to the other person's conscience, not yours... So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God—even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.* (10:23-31)
- Paul defends his Apostleship (9).
    - *Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not the result of my work in the Lord? Even though I may not be an apostle to others, surely I am to you! For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.* (9:1-2)
    - *This is my defense to those who sit in judgment on me. Don't we have the right to food and drink? Don't we have the right to take a believing wife along with us, as do the other apostles and the Lord's brothers and Cephas? Or is it only I and Barnabas who lack the right to not work for a living? ...For it is written in the Law of Moses: "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain." Is it about oxen that God is concerned? Surely he says this for us, doesn't he? Yes, this was written for us, because whoever plows and threshes should be able to do so in the hope of sharing in the harvest... If others have this right of support from you, shouldn't we have it all the more? But we did not use this right. On the contrary, we put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ. Don't you know that those who serve in the temple get their food from the temple, and that those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.* (9:3-14)
        - Paul was being criticized by some in the Corinthian church for accepting financial support from others.
        - Even though he did not use this right, Paul defended his right to receive compensation.
        - *the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.*
    - *Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I be-*

came like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings. (9:19-23)

- Self-discipline. *Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.* (9:24-27)
- A warning from Israel's history (10-11).
    - They knew better. *For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.* (10:1-5)
    - Do not be like them. *Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry." We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. We should not test Christ, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel. These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come.* (10:6-11)
    - Be careful. *So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.* (10:12-13)
    - *Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.* (11:1)
- Worship. (11)
    - Tradition. *I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the traditions just as I passed them on to you. But I*

want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head—it is the same as having her head shaved. For if a woman does not cover her head, she might as well have her hair cut off; but if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, then she should cover her head. A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man... Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God. Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him, but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For long hair is given to her as a covering. If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice—nor do the churches of God. (11:2-16)

    - Notice that Paul acknowledged this whole section as traditions - the covering or uncovering of the head was entirely grounded in the Jewish and cultural traditions of the first century, not today.
    - Most likely, Paul is simply trying to keep the peace in the Corinthian church. Remember, No one should seek their own good, but the good of others (10:23)
- The sacred nature of Communion.
    - Paul's rebuke. *In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval.* (11:17-19)
    - *So then, when you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat, for when you are eating, some of you go ahead with your own private suppers. As a result, one person remains hungry and another gets drunk. Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God by humiliating those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? Certainly not in this matter! For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever*

you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. (11:20-29)

- Jump to chapter 14.
  - Speaking in tongues.
    - Clear preaching (*prophecy*) is better. *For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people but to God. Indeed, no one understands them; they utter mysteries by the Spirit. But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort. Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves, but the one who prophesies edifies the church. I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be edified.* (1 Corinthians 14:2-5)
    - *Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking into the air. Undoubtedly there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning. If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and the speaker is a foreigner to me. So it is with you. Since you are eager for gifts of the Spirit, try to excel in those that build up the church.* (14:9-12)
      - Paul does not allow us to deny the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues. However, he brings to mind the event on the Day of Pentecost when the Apostles spoke, *"in other tongues,"* so that everyone, *"heard their own language being spoken"* (Acts 2:4, 8). *The gift of tongues was given to communicate the Gospel!
      - Paul reminded all of us to try to *excel in those* (gifts) *that build up the church.*
      - He also wrote, *in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.* (14:19)
  - Order in Worship.
    - *What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a*

word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up. If anyone speaks in a tongue, two—or at the most three—should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and to God. Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. For God is not a God of disorder but of peace—as in all the congregations of the Lord's people. (14:26-33)

- *Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.* (14:34-35)
    - In context, this seems to be a specific instruction to the women in the Corinthian church because they were part of creating the disorder in worship gatherings, not a directive for all local churches.
    - Making this passage a directive for all local churches (complimentarianism) also denies what Paul said in his other epistles.
    - *"I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church in Cenchreae. I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of his people and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been the benefactor of many people, including me"* (Romans 16:1-2).
    - He called Prisca, Euodia, Syntyche, Phoebe, Junia, Persis, Apphia (all women) his co-laborers, indicating their status as pastors and leaders in their local churches.
- *Therefore, my brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.* (14:39-40)

- Spiritual gifts. (12)
    - The Holy Spirit manifests himself. *Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were*

influenced and led astray to mute idols. Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit. (12:1-3)

- Different kinds of spiritual gifts.
    - All are from God. *There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.* (12:4-6)
    - *Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.* (12:7-11)
        - Paul's lists of spiritual gifts here and in his other epistles (Romans 12; Ephesians 4) are not intended to be comprehensive.
        - All spiritual gifts are given by God just as he determines… for the common good of the local church.
- Unity in the church (12)
    - *Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no spe-*

cial treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. (12:12-26)
        - The local church is one body with many parts.
        - So, too is the Body of Christ - the Church throughout the world.
        - No part of the Body of Christ, no local church, and no follow of Jesus is 'God's favorite.'
    - *Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? Now eagerly desire the greater gifts. And yet I will show you the most excellent way.* (12:27-31)
        - Everyone who follows Jesus, regardless of their gifts or office, is part of the body of Christ on equal footing with everyone else.
        - What are the greater gifts? Paul leads into chapter 13 with, I will show you the most excellent way.
- The greatest thing, the most excellent way, is love (13).
    - *If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.* (13:1-3)
        - If I manifest amazing spiritual gifts and miracles, what some call 'signs and wonders,' but do not love people I am just making noise.
        - If I preach great sermons and teach deep biblical truths but do not love people I amount to nothing.
        - If I am generous to a fault, advocating for the poor, and even make great personal sacrifices, but do not love people, I gain nothing in the kingdom of God.
    - Definition of love. *Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.* (4-8a)
    - That which lasts forever.
        - *Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will*

cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. (13:8-12)

- *And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.* (13:13)
    - In heaven our faith will become sight and will no longer be needed.
    - In heaven our hope will be fulfilled in Christ and will no longer be needed.
    - Only love will last forever.

- Resurrection (15)
    - The resurrection of Christ. *For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.* (15:3-8)
    - The cornerstone of faith. *But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.* (15:12-19)
        - There have always been those who denied the resurrection of Jesus.
        - Even before Christ, the Sadducees denied any resurrection whatsoever.
        - Apparently, there were those in the Corinthian church who denied Jesus' resurrection.
    - *So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishon-*

or, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body... Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" (15:42-56)

- Just like there have always been those who deny the resurrection, there are also those who deny the rapture - it is right here!
- *"...in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye… the trumpet will sound as Jesus appears in the sky. "For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever"* (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).
- The dead will be raised and perfected, then those who are still alive, then all those who follow Jesus will meet him in the sky.

- Paul's humility. *For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.* (15:9-11)
- The offering. *Now about the collection for the Lord's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem.* (16:1-3)
- Conclusion. (16)
    - Paul's plan. *After I go through Macedonia, I will come to you—for I will be going through Macedonia. Perhaps I will stay with you for a while, or even spend the winter, so that you can help me on my journey, wherever I go. For I do not want to see you now and make only a passing visit; I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me.* (16:5-9)

- Paul made personal remarks about *Timothy* (16:10-11), *Apollos* (16:12), and *Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Archaicus* (16:15-18).
- *Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love.*(16:13-14)

2 Corinthians

- 2nd Corinthians was written by the Apostle Paul about 52AD, perhaps a year after he wrote 1st Corinthians.
- Whereas 1st Corinthians was probably written from Ephesus (2 Corinthians 1:8), 2nd Corinthians was probably written from Philippi.
- Apparently Paul's first letter to the Corinthian church had caused quite a stir and many had repented of the mess they had caused (2 Corinthians 7:5–11). However, there were still problems and the church was still struggling.
- This is the most personal of all Paul's epistles.

OUTLINE

- Introduction (1)
  - Greeting. *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the church of God in Corinth, together with all his holy people throughout Achaia: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.* (1:1-2)
  - Praise to God. *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ...* (1:3-5)
  - Paul's suffering. *We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.* (1:8-11)
- A change of plans (1-2)
  - *I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia and to come back to you from Macedonia, and then to have you send me on my way to Judea... I call God as my witness—and I stake my life on it—that it was in order to spare you that I did not return to Corinth. Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, because it is by faith you stand firm. So I made up my mind that I would not make another painful visit to you. For if I grieve you, who is left to make me glad but you whom I have grieved? I*

wrote as I did, so that when I came I would not be distressed by those who should have made me rejoice. I had confidence in all of you, that you would all share my joy. For I wrote you out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to grieve you but to let you know the depth of my love for you. (1:16-2:4)

- The promise of Christ. *But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not "Yes" and "No." For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—by me and Silas and Timothy—was not "Yes" and "No," but in him it has always been "Yes." For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God. Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.* (1:18-22)
- Forgiveness to Paul's critic. *If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you to some extent—not to put it too severely. The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient. Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him. Another reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. Anyone you forgive, I also forgive. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.* (2:5-11)
- *Now when I went to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ and found that the Lord had opened a door for me, I still had no peace of mind, because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I said goodbye to them and went on to Macedonia.* (2:12-13)

- Paul's message (2). *But thanks be to God, who always leads us as captives in Christ's triumphal procession and uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere. For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are an aroma that brings death; to the other, an aroma that brings life. And who is equal to such a task? Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, as those sent from God.* (2:14-17)
- Paul's ministry (3).
    - *You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. Such confidence we have through Christ before God. Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of*

the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. (3:2-6)
    - *Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away. But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.* (3:12-18)
- Strength in Weakness (4-5)
    - The light of the Gospel. *Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.* (4:1-6)
    - Jars of clay. *But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body.* (4:7-11)
    - Hope. *Since we have that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak, because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself. All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God. Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen,*

since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. (4:13-18)
    - The new body. *For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. For we live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.* (5:1-10)
        - Paul expresses his desire to be perfected in eternity, but acknowledges his contentment on earth or in heaven.
        - The Holy Spirit is a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.
        - we live by faith, not sight.
- Reconciliation.
    - In Christ. *For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.* (5:14-15)
    - With one another. *So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.* (5:16-21)
        - *...anyone who is in Christ is a new creation.*
        - If God can be reconciled with us through Christ, we must be reconciled with one another as well.
- A rebuke. *We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and*

distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything. We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians, and opened wide our hearts to you. We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us. As a fair exchange—I speak as to my children—open wide your hearts also. (6:3-13)

- Two instructions.
    - *Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God...* (6:14-16)
    - *Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.* (7:1)
- Paul pleas for reconciliation (7).
    - *Make room for us in your hearts. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have exploited no one. I do not say this to condemn you; I have said before that you have such a place in our hearts that we would live or die with you. I have spoken to you with great frankness; I take great pride in you. I am greatly encouraged; in all our troubles my joy knows no bounds.* (7:2-4)
    - *Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while—yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter. So even though I wrote to you, it was neither on account of the one who did the wrong nor on account of the injured party, but rather that before God you could see for yourselves how devoted to us you are. By all this we are encouraged...* (7:8-13)
    - *I am glad I can have complete confidence in you.* (7:16)
- The collection (8-9)

- *And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. So we urged Titus, just as he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.* (8:1-7)
- *And here is my judgment about what is best for you in this matter. Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have. Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. The goal is equality, as it is written: "The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little.* (8:10-15)
- *There is no need for me to write to you about this service to the Lord's people. For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since last year you in Achaia were ready to give; and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action. But I am sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you in this matter should not prove hollow, but that you may be ready, as I said you would be. For if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we—not to say anything about you—would be ashamed of having been so confident. So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given.* (9:1-5)
- *Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.* (9:6-7)
- *This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved*

yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift! (9:12-15)

- Paul defends his ministry (10-11)
    - *By the humility and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you—I, Paul, who am "timid" when face to face with you, but "bold" toward you when away! I beg you that when I come I may not have to be as bold as I expect to be toward some people who think that we live by the standards of this world. For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete.* (10:1-6)
    - *You are judging by appearances. If anyone is confident that they belong to Christ, they should consider again that we belong to Christ just as much as they do. So even if I boast somewhat freely about the authority the Lord gave us for building you up rather than tearing you down, I will not be ashamed of it. I do not want to seem to be trying to frighten you with my letters. For some say, "His letters are weighty and forceful, but in person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing." Such people should realize that what we are in our letters when we are absent, we will be in our actions when we are present.* (10:7-11)
    - *We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise. We, however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine our boasting to the sphere of service God himself has assigned to us, a sphere that also includes you... Our hope is that, as your faith continues to grow, our sphere of activity among you will greatly expand, so that we can preach the gospel in the regions beyond you. For we do not want to boast about work already done in someone else's territory. But, "Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord." For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.* (10:12-18)
    - False Apostles. *I hope you will put up with me in a little foolishness. Yes, please put up with me! I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy... But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes to*

you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the Spirit you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough. I do not think I am in the least inferior to those "super-apostles." I may indeed be untrained as a speaker, but I do have knowledge. We have made this perfectly clear to you in every way... And I will keep on doing what I am doing in order to cut the ground from under those who want an opportunity to be considered equal with us in the things they boast about. For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve. (11:1-15)

- Paul's suffering (11-12)
    - Paul's credibility. *Whatever anyone else dares to boast about—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast about. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I. Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches…* (11:21-29)
    - Paul's thorn in the flesh. *Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say, or because of these surpassingly great revelations. Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.* (12:6-10)
    - *Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending*

ourselves to you? We have been speaking in the sight of God as those in Christ; and everything we do, dear friends, is for your strengthening. For I am afraid that when I come I may not find you as I want you to be, and you may not find me as you want me to be. I fear that there may be discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, slander, gossip, arrogance and disorder. I am afraid that when I come again my God will humble me before you, and I will be grieved over many who have sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual sin and debauchery in which they have indulged. (12:10-21)

- Final words (13)
  - A warning. *This will be my third visit to you… I already gave you a warning when I was with you the second time. I now repeat it while absent: On my return I will not spare those who sinned earlier or any of the others, since you are demanding proof that Christ is speaking through me. He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you. For to be sure, he was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God's power. Likewise, we are weak in him, yet by God's power we will live with him in our dealing with you.* (13:1-4)
  - Confrontation is coming. *Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test? And I trust that you will discover that we have not failed the test. Now we pray to God that you will not do anything wrong—not so that people will see that we have stood the test but so that you will do what is right even though we may seem to have failed. For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. We are glad whenever we are weak but you are strong; and our prayer is that you may be fully restored. This is why I write these things when I am absent, that when I come I may not have to be harsh in my use of authority—the authority the Lord gave me for building you up, not for tearing you down.* (13:5-10)
  - *Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.* (13:11)

LESSON 34

Romans

- The epistle to the Romans was written by Paul from Corinth at the close of his third missionary journey in 58AD.
- Romans is addressed to "to all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people" (1:7). It was not address to "the church in Rome," probably because there were multiple churches meeting in homes throughout the city by this time.
- Key passage: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith" (1:16-17)

OUTLINE

- INTRODUCTION / SALUTATION (1)
    - *Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God…* (v. 1)
    - The Gospel. *...the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for his name's sake. And you also are among those Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ* (vv. 2-6).
        - The Gospel was promised long before Jesus came to earth through the Old Testament prophets.
        - Jesus is both 100% human (*a descendant of David*) and 100% divine - God Incarnate (the Son of God ...*Jesus Christ our Lord*).
        - The resurrection of Jesus is the foundation of both the Gospel and Christianity itself.
        - Now that the Gospel is calling to Gentiles as well as Jews, all are *called to belong to Jesus Christ.*
    - *To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.* (v. 7)
    - Statement of Purpose:
        - *First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. God, whom I serve in my spirit in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you. I long to*

see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong—that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith. I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles. I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome. (vv. 8-15)

- Paul's thesis. *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith* (Habakkuk 2:4)." (vv. 16-17)

- CONDEMNATION - THE UNIVERSAL PROBLEM (1-3)
  - No excuse for anyone. *The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.* (vv. 18-20)
  - The foolishness of humanity.
    - Human intellect. *For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.* (vv. 21-23)
    - The results.
      - God gave them over. *Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.* (v. 24)
      - *They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator…* (v. 25)
        - *Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with*

lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error. (vv. 26-27)

- *Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.* (vv. 28-32)

- God is right. *You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. So when you, a mere human being, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. God "will repay each person according to what they have done." To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For God does not show favoritism.* (2:1-11)

    - No excuses.
    - The hypocrisy of judgementalism.
    - ...you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath...
    - God's judgement and wrath is coming. As bad as things seem to be at times, it will get worse when his wrath is no longer withheld.
    - God does not show favoritism.
- We will be judged by our own standard. *All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them.) This will take place on the day when God judges people's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.* (2:12-16)
    - Remember, Jesus said, *"For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you"* (Matthew 7:2).
    - Those who judge others according to *the law* will be judged according to that law… and they fall short of their own standard.
    - On the other hand, even those *who sin apart from the law - those who reject the validity of the law of Moses still do by nature things required by the law… show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts.* In other words, they know God's law is just because they were created by God whether they acknowledge it or not and they will be judged by God according to that.
- Confronting the Judaizers - those who insisted Gentile Christians must keep Jewish law and customs.
    - The danger of hypocrisy. *Now you, if you call yourself a Jew; if you rely on the law and boast in God; if you know his will and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the law; if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who are in the dark, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of little children, because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth—you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who boast in the law, do you dishonor God by*

breaking the law? As it is written: "God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you." (2:17-24)
    - Personal obedience is the key. *Circumcision has value if you observe the law, but if you break the law, you have become as though you had not been circumcised. So then, if those who are not circumcised keep the law's requirements, will they not be regarded as though they were circumcised? The one who is not circumcised physically and yet obeys the law will condemn you who, even though you have the written code and circumcision, are a lawbreaker. A person is not a Jew who is one only outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a person's praise is not from other people, but from God.* (2:25-29)
- God is faithful.
    - Religion has value because God is faithful. *What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? Much in every way! First of all, the Jews have been entrusted with the very words of God. What if some were unfaithful? Will their unfaithfulness nullify God's faithfulness? Not at all! Let God be true, and every human being a liar. As it is written: "So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge."* (3:1-4)
    - God is just. *But if our unrighteousness brings out God's righteousness more clearly, what shall we say? That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on us? (I am using a human argument.) Certainly not! If that were so, how could God judge the world? Someone might argue, "If my falsehood enhances God's truthfulness and so increases his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?" Why not say—as some slanderously claim that we say—"Let us do evil that good may result"? Their condemnation is just!* (3:5-8)
- No one is righteous. *What shall we conclude then? Do we have any advantage? Not at all! For we have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin. As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one* (quoting Psalm 5, 10, 14, 36, 53, 140; Ecclesiastes 7; Isaiah 59)." (3:9-12)

- The law defines sin. *Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.* (3:20)

- THE SOLUTION - RIGHTEOUSNESS THROUGH FAITH (3-8)
  - *But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.* (3:21-24)
    - Righteousness does not come through the law because no one is able to keep the whole law.
    - *...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...*
    - Righteousness comes to us only *through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.*
  - Salvation is not really free, as some like to say. *God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.* (3:25-26)
  - Faith is required. *Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. Because of what law? The law that requires works? No, because of the law that requires faith. For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.* (3:27-31)
    - No one can boast!
    - Since there is *only one God* he is God of everyone equally and at the same time.
    - We uphold the law because of faith.
  - Even people like Abraham, who lived before Christ, are justified by faith.
    - *What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter? If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. What does Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness* (Genesis 15:6)." (4:1-3)
    - An illustration. *Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly,*

their faith is credited as righteousness. David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the one to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: "Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them (Psalm 32)." (4:4-7)

- Abraham was obedient because of his faith and his faith is what justified him.
    - *Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before! And he received circumcision as a sign, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised… Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham.* (4:9-16)
    - *...Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him… he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.* (4:18-25)
- Justification through faith.
    - *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.* (5:1-5)

        - When we put our faith in Christ, not only are we *justified through faith, we have peace with God...*
        - When we put our faith in Christ, not only are we *justified through faith… we [gain] access by faith into his grace...*
        - *suffering produces perseverance… perseverance [produces] character… character [produces] hope...*
    - *You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* (5:6-8)
    - *...we have now received reconciliation... through our Lord Jesus Christ* (5:11)
- Life through Christ.
    - *Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned… death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam…* (5:12-14)
    - *...For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! ...The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!* (5:15-17)
    - *Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous... where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* (5:18-21)
    - *What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father,*

we too may live a new life... For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. (6:1-11)

- *Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.* (6:12-14)

- Freedom.
  - *What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means! Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.* (6:15-18)
  - *But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.* (6:22-23)
  - *So, my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. For when we were in the realm of the flesh, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in us, so that we bore fruit for death. But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.* (7:4-6)

- The Law defines sin.
    - *What shall we say, then? Is the law sinful? Certainly not! ...I would not have known what sin was had it not been for the law... For apart from the law, sin was dead. Once I was alive apart from the law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death.* (7:1-11)
    - Our sin nature. *We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing... For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in my sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.* (7:14-25)
- Life in the Holy Spirit.
    - *Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.* (8:1-4)
    - Contrast. *Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the*

realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you. Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. (8:5-17)

- The contrast between the flesh and the Spirit.
    - *...minds set on what the flesh desires vs. minds set on what the Spirit desires.*
    - *...death vs. life and peace.*
    - *...hostile to God… unable to please God vs. righteousness.*
- *...we are God's children… heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.*
- A word about suffering.
    - *I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us... We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.* (8:18-23)
    - Hope. *For in this hope, we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.* (8:24-25)
    - *In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for*

God's people in accordance with the will of God. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. (8:26-30)

- The Holy Spirit helps us *in our weakness.*
- The Holy Spirit *intercedes for us… in accordance with the will of God.*
- *...we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*
- *For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified*. *This is not 'predestination!'

- In Christ we win! ...*If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* (8:31-39)

- PAUL'S ANGUISH OVER ISRAEL (9-11)
  - *I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience confirms it through the Holy Spirit—I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race, the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption to sonship; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. Theirs are the patriarchs, and*

from them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen. (9:1-5)

- *It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children... it is not the children by physical descent who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring... For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God's mercy.* (9:6-16)
- *What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; but the people of Israel, who pursued the law as the way of righteousness, have not attained their goal. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone.* (9:30-32)
- *Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. Since they did not know the righteousness of God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.* (10:1-4)
- *If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame." For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?"* (10:9-16)
- *I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew… at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. And if by grace, then it cannot be based on works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.* (11:1-6)
- *Again, I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come*

to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their full inclusion bring! ...For if their rejection brought reconciliation to the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? ...Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree! (11:11-24)

- *I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, and in this way all Israel will be saved. As it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.* (11:25-26)

- PRACTICAL LIVING (12-15).
  - *Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.* (12:1-2)
  - *For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.* (12:3-8)
  - *Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but*

be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath… Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (12:9-21)

- *Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience.* (13:1-5)
- *Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not covet," and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.* (13:8-10)
- *Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters…* (14:1)
- *You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat... So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God. Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister.* (14:10-13)
- *Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.* (14:19)
- *We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up... May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God...* (15:1-7)

- PAUL'S PLAN. *But now that there is no more place for me to work in these regions, and since I have been longing for many years to visit you, I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to see you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there, after I have enjoyed your company for a while. Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the Lord's people there. For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the Lord's people in Jerusalem. They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings. So after I have completed this task and have made sure that they have received this contribution, I will go to Spain and visit you on the way. I know that when I come to you, I will come in the full measure of the blessing of Christ.* (15:23-29)
- FINAL WORDS (16).
    - *I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church in Cenchreae. I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of his people and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been the benefactor of many people, including me.* (16:1-2_
    - *I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people. Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I rejoice because of you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil.* (16:17-19)
    - *Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith—to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.* (16:25-27)

LESSON 35

Philippians

- Philippians was written by the Apostle Paul about 62 AD, while he was a prisoner in Rome.
- Because of the vision Paul had received about 10 years before writing this letter he traveled to Macedonia and visited Philippi during his second missionary journey (Acts 16:6-13). Philippi was an important city in the Macedonian region and several people, including Lydia and her family, accepted Christ. This led to a local church that met in Lydia's house (Acts 16:14–34).
- When the Philippian church learned Paul was imprisoned in Rome they sent their pastor, Epaphroditus to help him and bring gifts to him (Philippians 4:18). While there, Epaphroditus was taken ill and then returned to Philippi with the Epistle to the Philippians.
- CENTRAL THEME: Living the Christian Life.

OUTLINE

- Encouragement (1)
    - Salutation. *Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.* (1:1-2)
    - Paul's affection and prayers for the church. *I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.* (1:3-11)
        - There is a partnership in ministry that cannot be overlooked.
        - Paul is confident that *he who began a good work in [the Philippian Christians] will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ.*
        - Paul prayed specifically for the Philippians:
            - That their *love may abound more and more...*
            - That they would have *knowledge and depth of insight...*

        - That they would be *able to discern what is best...*
        - That they would be *pure and blameless...*
        - That they would be *filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ.*
- Encouragement in spite of circumstances.
    - *Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.* (1:12-14)
        - Paul is in prison, but he is not discouraged because the gospel was being advanced.
        - The palace guard had listened to the Gospel.
        - Others were emboldened to share their faith without fear.
    - *It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice.* (1:15-18)
    - *I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.* (1:20-26)
- Encouragement to persevere. *Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him,*

but also to suffer for him, since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have. (1:27-30)

- Imitating Christ (2)
  - *Therefore* (refer back to c. 1) *if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.* (2:1-4)
  - *In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death — even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* (2:5-11)
  - *Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.* (2:12-13)
  - *Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, "children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation." Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain.* (2:14-16)
- Paul's plans (2)
  - Timothy. *I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon.* (2:19-24)
  - Epaphroditus. *But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill.*

Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety. So then, welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor people like him, because he almost died for the work of Christ. He risked his life to make up for the help you yourselves could not give me. (2:25-30)

- Following Jesus (3)
  - *Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord!* (3:1)
  - No confidence in the flesh. *Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh. For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh—though I myself have reasons for such confidence. If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.* (3:2-6)
  - Nothing else matters. *But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.* (3:7-11)
  - Press on! *Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.* (3:12-14)
  - Follow the right example. *All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. Only let us live up to what we have already attained. Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do. For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their*

mind is set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. (3:15-21)

- Concluding thoguhts (4)
  - *Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!* (4:1)
  - A personal plea. *I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my coworkers, whose names are in the book of life.* (4:2-3)
  - Live well!
    - *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!* (4:4)
    - *Let your gentleness be evident to all.* (4:5)
    - *Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.* (4:6-7)
    - *Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.* (4:8)
    - *Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.* (4:9)
  - Gratitude.
    - *I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.* (4:10-13)
    - I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus. (4:14-19)

Lesson 36

Colossians

- The Book of Colossians was written by the Apostle Paul during his imprisonment in Rome (Acts 28:30), about 62 A. D. He also wrote the books of Ephesians and Philemon during this time. Collectively they are known as the Prison Epistles.
- Although Paul never visited Colosse (Colossians 2:1) he did spend two years teaching in Ephesus and some people from Colosse may have traveled the 90 miles between the two cities to hear him teach. Some of them came to know Christ. Epaphras (the pastor at Colosse) and Philemon were probably two of these people.
- Colosse was only twelve miles from Laodicea, which had a large number of Judaizers - Jewish teachers who taught the same perverted gospel that hindered some of the other first century churches. The Judaizers were forerunners of what became Gnosticism in the second century and included several characteristics:
    - It was a Jewish sect that stressed a need to observe Old Testament law and Jewish customs.
    - It was mystical in that it emphasized a "deeper knowledge," or revelation.
    - It involved the worship of angels as mediators between people and God (2:18).
    - It was exclusive in that it stressed the special privilege and knolwedge and its adherents.
    - It denied the deity of Christ.
- The Central Message *"For in Him [Jesus] dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily"* (Colossians 2:9).

OUTLINE

- Salutation. *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To God's holy people in Colossae, the faithful brothers and sisters in Christ: Grace and peace to you from God our Father.* (1:1-2)
- Thankfulness. *We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people—the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel that has come to you. In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace. You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.* (1:3-8)

- Paul was thankful for their faith in Christ Jesus.
- Paul was thankful for the love they had for all God's people.
- Paul was thankful that the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world.
- Paul was thankful Pastor Epaphras told us of your love in the Spirit.

- Paul's prayer for the Colossians. *For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.* (1:9-14)
  - Godly knowledge.
  - Wisdom.
  - Understanding.
  - A life worthy of a Christ follower.
  - Spiritual fruit.
  - Strength.
  - Endurance.
  - Patience.
- The supremacy and work of Jesus Christ.
  - God Incarnate. *The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.* (1:14-20)
    - This brings to mind John's words, *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the*

one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:1-5, 14)
    - Paul gives a 'master class,' on the doctrine of the deity of Christ!
- Reconciliation. *Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.* (1:21-23)
    - Before Jesus:
        - you were alienated from God
        - enemies in your minds
        - evil behavior
    - After Jesus:
        - reconciled
        - holy
        - established and firm
- Life in Christ. *So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ. For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority. In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.* (2:6-15)
    - Live the life you have been given in Christ.
    - Be thankful.
    - Avoid *hollow and deceptive philosophy.*
    - The fullness of God in human form is Jesus Christ.
    - Jesus is the head over everything.
    - *God made you alive in Christ.*

- Freedom in Christ. *Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you. Such a person also goes into great detail about what they have seen; they are puffed up with idle notions by their unspiritual mind. They have lost connection with the head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow. Since you died with Christ to the elemental spiritual forces of this world, why, as though you still belonged to the world, do you submit to its rules: "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? These rules, which have to do with things that are all destined to perish with use, are based on merely human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.* (2:16-23)
- Living in Christ (3).
    - *Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.* (vv. 1-4)
    - *Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.* (vv. 5-10)
    - *Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among*

you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (3:1-17)

- Unity in Christ.
- *clothe yourselves with:*
  - *compassion*
  - *kindness*
  - *humility*
  - *gentleness*
  - *patience*
- *Forgive as the Lord forgave you.*
- *be thankful*
- *Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.*
- *whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him*

- Practical Instructions.
  - Family relationships. *Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.* (3:18-21)
    *This brings to mind, *"Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ"* (Ephesians 5:21).
  - Civic relationships. *Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for their wrongs, and there is no favoritism. Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.* (3:22-4:1)
  - Prayer. *Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.* (4:2-4)
  - Outsiders. *Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.* (4:5)

    - Words. *Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.* (4:6)
- Personal greetings. *Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here. My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.) Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings. These are the only Jews among my co-workers for the kingdom of God, and they have proved a comfort to me. Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis. Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings. Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea. Tell Archippus: "See to it that you complete the ministry you have received in the Lord." I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.* (4:7-18)

Lesson 37

Ephesians

- Ephesians was written from Rome about 60AD and is one of The Prison Epistles, so called because Paul was in prison when he wrote them. The Prison Epistles include: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.
- During his Second Missionary Journey Paul was forbidden by the Holy Spirit to enter Asia, where Ephesus was the center (Acts 16:6). He was called by a vision to Macedonia (Acts 16:9-10). He was led by the Spirit into Europe as far as Corinth, after which he returned by way of Ephesus (Acts 18:19). He returned to Ephesus during his Third Missionary Journey and stayed two years — longer than at any other place (Acts 19:8–10).
- Paul wrote, *"But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me"* (1 Corinthians 16:8-9). He had great affection for the church in Ephesus and was quite emotional when he told them goodbye (Acts 20:17–38).
- Central Message: *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world"* (Ephesians 1:3–4).

OUTLINE

- Prologue (1)
    - Salutation. *"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To God's holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ"* (1:1-2).
    - Praise God! *"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves"* (1:1-6).
        - We receive every spiritual blessing in Christ.
        - In Christ we are *predestined for adoption to sonship.*
            - This does not negate freewill!
            - Nor, does this mean we become sons or daughters of God in the way Jesus is.
            - We are to be *holy and blameless in his sight* because we love him and follow him.
- Our place In Christ (1-2).
    - *"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lav-*

ished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ" (1:7-10).
    - *redemption*
    - *forgiveness of sins*
    - the *riches of God's grace*
    - *the mystery of his will*
- *"In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory"* (1:11-12).
- *"And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory"* (1:13-14).
- Paul's prayer for Christians. *"For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way"* (1:15-23).
    - *the Spirit of wisdom of revelation*
    - enlightenment
    - *hope*
    - *glorious inheritance*
    - *power*
- From death to life.
    - Before - Death. *"As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one*

time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath" (2:1-3).

- Remember, we were not just bad, we were *dead in our transgressions and sins.*
- We followed *the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is not at work in those who are disobedient.*
- We gratified *the cravings of our flesh*
- We *were by nature deserving of wrath.*

- After - Alive. *"But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do"* (2:4-10).
  - *God… made us alive with Christ*
  - *it is by grace you have been saved… it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast.*
  - We have been (re)*created in Christ Jesus to do good works.*

- Reconciliation in Christ (2-3).
  - Jews and Gentiles. *"Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (which is done in the body by human hands)—remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and*

prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit" (2:11-22).
    - God's Plan. *"For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles — Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus"* (3:1-6).
- Paul's ministry (3).
    - His work. *"I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory"* (3:7-13).
    - His prayer. *"For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God"* (3:14-19).
    - All for God's glory. *"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen"* (3:20-21).
- Unity and maturity (4).
    - Live worthy. *"As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely hum-*

ble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it" (4:1-7).

- *Be completely humble and gentle...*
- *...be patient, bearing with one another in love.*
- *Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.*

- The Local Church. *"So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work"* (4:11-16).
  - Leaders are given to serve the local church - *to equip God's people for works of service.*
  - If done properly:
    - *the body of Christ [will] be build up*
    - we *[will] all reach unity in the faith*
    - We will *become mature*
    - We will recognize the truth in love and never be deceived by *the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.*
    - We will *speak the truth in love.*
    - We will *grow… to become the mature body of him who is the head, that is Christ.*
    - *each part [will do] its work*

- Practical Instruction for living in faith (4-5).
  - Live as a follower of Jesus. *"So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed. That, however, is not the way of life you learned when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is*

in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness" (4:17-24).
    - Do not live like someone who does not yet know Jesus!
    - Those who do not yet know Jesus:
        - *[give] themselves over to sensuality [and] indulge every kind of impurity*
        - *full of greed*
    - *put off your old self*
    - *be made new in [your thinking] - created to be like God in… righteousness and holiness*.
- Be truthful. *"Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body"* (4:25).
- Control anger. *"In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold… Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice"* (4:26-27, 31).
- Do not steal. *"Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need"* (4:28).
- Control your words. *"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen"* (4:29).
- Follow the Holy Spirit. *"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption"* (4:30).
- Forgive. *"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you"* (4:32).
- Follow the Lord's example. *"Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God"* (5:1-2).
- Be blameless. *"But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them"* (5:3-7).

        - Blameless regarding *sexual immorality*
        - Blameless regarding *greed*
        - Blameless in what we say.
        - *because these are improper for God's holy people.*
    - Remember who you were. *"For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light"* (5:8-13).
    - Be careful. *"Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (5:15-20).
- The Christian Home (5-6).
    - The overriding principle. *"Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ"* (5:21).
    - Husbands and wives. *"Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body. "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband"* (5:22-33).

        - First, remember the overriding principle! *"Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ"* (5:21)
        - This is not about 'who's in charge,' but about mutual respect, commitment, and love - all of which are absolutely necessary for a healthy marriage.
    - Children. *"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise—"so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord"* (6:1-4).
- In the workplace. *"Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free. And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him"* (6:5-9).
    - Nearly all slaves in the first century were enslaved through military conquest or because of debt they could not pay.
    - There are principles in this passage that apply to the workplace:
        - Respect those in charge.
        - Work like you're working for Jesus. *"And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him"* (Colossians 3:17).
        - If you are in charge treat those under you fairly.
- The armor of God (6).
    - First, know your enemy. *"Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms"* (6:10-12).
        - Our enemy is never other people!
        - Our enemy is:
            - The devil.
            - The world system.
    - Put on the armor. *"Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can ex-*

tinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (6:13-17).
    - *the belt of truth*
    - *the breastplate of righteousness*
    - *[the shoes of] readiness that comes from the gospel of peace*
    - *the shield of faith*
    - *the helmet of salvation*
    - *the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*
  - Pray! *"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should"* (6:18-20).
- Closing. *"Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything, so that you also may know how I am and what I am doing. I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you. Peace to the brothers and sisters, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love"* (6:21-24).

Lesson 38

Philemon

- Written by the Apostle Paul while he was in prison in Rome about 62AD.
- One of the "Prison Epistles" along with Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians.
- Written to Philemon, a wealthy resident of Colosse, who was a relatively new Christian.
- The church in Colossae probably met in Philemon's house.
- The letter was written on behalf of Onesimus, a runaway slave who had robbed Philemon and ended up in Rome with Paul. Onesimus probably delivered the letter to Philemon.
- The book is just one chapter long.

OUTLINE

- Salutation (vv. 1-3).
  Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker—also to Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier—and to the church that meets in your home: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - Paul was in prison in Rome and Timothy was there with him.
  - This is a very personal letter - more personal than any of Paul's other letters.
  - He mentions, Apphia and Archippus - probably two Christians in the church of Colossae.
- Gratitude (vv. 4-7).
  I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, because I hear about your love for all his holy people and your faith in the Lord Jesus. I pray that your partnership with us in the faith may be effective in deepening your understanding of every good thing we share for the sake of Christ. Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the Lord's people.
  - Paul expressed personal appreciation for Philemon.
  - Philemon was probably a leader in the church of Colossae, partly because they met in his house and partly because he had developed a reputation for spiritual maturity.
    - *your love for all his holy people*
    - *your faith in the Lord Jesus*
    - *your partnership with us in the faith*
    - *you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the Lord's people*
  - Paul prayed that Philemon would continue to grow in the faith.

- Paul's request (vv. 8-21)
    - *Therefore, although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do, yet I prefer to appeal to you on the basis of love. It is as none other than Paul—an old man and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus—that I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains. Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me. I am sending him—who is my very heart—back to you. I would have liked to keep him with me so that he could take your place in helping me while I am in chains for the gospel. But I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that any favor you do would not seem forced but would be voluntary.* (vv. 8-14)
        - Paul begins by reminding Philemon that he has the authority as an Apostle to simply tell Philemon what to do, but he wants this to be Philemon's decision.
        - Onesimus has accepted Christ and was helping Paul.
        - Paul has developed an affection for Onesimus.
        - Paul is asking a favor - a pretty big favor in the first century.
    - *Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back forever—no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a fellow man and as a brother in the Lord.* (v. 15-16)
        - As a Christian, Onesimus' status has changed.
        - His relationship with Philemon was no longer just that of owner and slave, now they were brothers in Christ.
    - *So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back—not to mention that you owe me your very self. I do wish, brother, that I may have some benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ. Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask.* (vv. 17-21)
        - Paul is not necessarily asking Philemon to set Onesimus free - in all likelihood, Onesimus was a slave for financial reasons. He probably owed Philemon money ...and he had stolen more when he ran away.
        - Paul is asking for something perhaps more difficult - he wants Philemon to forgive Onesimus and accept him as a brother in Christ.
        - Paul knew how important this was because of the way he was seen when he first accepted Christ, *"In*

Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, 'Ananias!' 'Yes, Lord,' he answered. The Lord told him, 'Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.' 'Lord,' Ananias answered, 'I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.' But the Lord said to Ananias, 'Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.'" (Acts 9:10-16)

- Closing (vv. 22-25).
  And one thing more: Prepare a guest room for me, because I hope to be restored to you in answer to your prayers. Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings. And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.
  - Paul and Philemon must have been close friends - not only is Paul asking him to forgive his runaway slave, but he is inviting himself to stay at Philemon's house!
  - He mentions *Epaphras, Mark, Aristarchus, Demas* and *Luke* - we know some of these people:
    - *Epaphras* was probably the pastor of the church in Colossae and is mentioned in the Book of Colossians.
    - *Mark* was Barnabas' nephew who went with them on the First Missionary Journey, but got homesick and left them (Acts 13:13). When Barnabas wanted to give Mark another chance Paul was against it and this caused a rift between Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:36-40). Apparently, Mark redeemed himself in Paul's eyes because now he was with him in Rome. In addition, he wrote the Gospel of Mark, taking dictation from Peter.
    - *Luke* was a Gentile convert to Christianity who traveled with Paul and wrote the Gospel of Luke, as well as the Book of Acts.

Lesson 39

1st & 2nd Timothy

1st Timothy

- 1st & 2nd Timothy and Titus are collectively known as the "Pastoral Epistles."
- The Pastoral Epistles are probably the last letters Paul wrote.
- 1st Timothy was written about 64AD after Paul had been released from prison in Rome and Timothy was pastoring the church of Ephesus.
- 1st Timothy is a masterclass on managing the ministry of a local church, both from the pastor's perspective and the congregation's.

OUTLINE

- Salutation (1). *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope, To Timothy my true son in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.* (1:1-2)
- The Church's Message (1).
    - Sound Doctrine. *As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer or to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. Such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God's work—which is by faith. The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Some have departed from these and have turned to meaningless talk. They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.* (1:3-7)
        - Apparently, the church in Ephesus was facing some of the same issues we face today—*false doctrines* and those who *want to be teachings of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.*
        - We can take some comfort in the fact that *myths and endless genealogies… controversial speculations…* and *meaningless talk* have always been an issue, but the Gospel endures and the Church is still here.
    - The Law. *We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. We also know that the law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for the sexually immoral, for those practicing homosexuality, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to*

the sound doctrine that conforms to the gospel concerning the glory of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me. (1:8 -11)
    - *...the law is good if one uses it properly* is a great statement!
    - The Law is our moral and ethical guide, still useful for defining sin.
    - Because Christians are forgiven through God's Grace, the Law does not condemn us. However, it condemns those who have not accepted Christ.
    - The Law is not subject to our opinion or the ways of our culture.
  - Grace. *I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me trustworthy, appointing me to his service. Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.* (1:12-17)
  - Faith and Conscience. *Timothy, my son, I am giving you this command in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by recalling them you may fight the battle well, holding on to faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and so have suffered shipwreck with regard to the faith. Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.* (1:18-20)
- The Church's Members (2-3).
  - Prayer. *I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time. And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle—I am telling the truth, I am not lying—and a true and*

faithful teacher of the Gentiles. (2:1-7)
    - Pray for everyone.
    - Pray for everyone because *God… wants all people to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.*
        - *Petitions*
        - *Prayers*
        - *Intercession*
        - *Thanksgiving*
- Men and Women. *Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing. I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves, not with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God. A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But women will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.* (2:8-14)
    - Anytime Scripture deals with the roles of men and women in the church we must remember three things:
        - Notice Paul's pronouns: *I want… I also want… I do not permit* - these indicate Paul's opinions.
        - Paul was a product of the patriarchal culture that existed in the first century.
        - Paul was also a product of a heavily patriarchal tradition in Judaism.
    - There are two schools of thought when it comes to the roles of men and women:
        - Complementarianism - men and women are created equal in worth, dignity, and value, but are designed by God with distinct, complementary roles in the church and marriage.
        - Egalitarianism - while men and women are different, they are equal and able to serve God and conduct themselves in their home as he leads them.
    - Of course men should pray and worship in holiness - so should women.
    - Women should dress modestly - so should men.
- Leaders.
    - Pastors (and other spiritual leaders). *Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer*

desires a noble task. Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap. (3:1-7)

- This reflects the vital importance of carefully choosing those who teach the Bible and lead the church.
- This applies to all spiritual leaders, but especially pastors:
  - *above reproach*
  - *faithful to his wife*
  - *Temperate*
  - *self-controlled*
  - *Respectable*
  - *Hospitable*
  - *able to teach*
  - *not given to drunkenness*
  - *not violent but gentle*
  - *not quarrelsome*
  - *not a lover of money*
  - *manage his own family well*
  - *must not be a recent convert*
  - *good reputation with outsiders*

- Deacons (and other church leaders) *In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. In the same way, the women are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. A deacon must be faithful to his wife and must manage his children and his household well. Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.* (3:8-13)

- Because the Apostles were still considered the leaders (pastors) of the Body of Christ and because most teachers traveled from place to place, *deacons* were often the leaders of the local church.
- Notice how this section included women.
- This teaching sets a standard for all local church leaders that includes:
  - *worthy of respect*
  - *Sincere*
  - *not indulging in much wine*
  - *not pursuing dishonest gain*
  - *keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience*
  - *must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve*
  - *not malicious talkers*
  - *Temperate*
  - *trustworthy in everything*
  - *must be faithful to his wife*
  - *manage his children and his household well.*

- The Congregation. *Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.* (3:14-15)

- The Church's Ministry (4-6).
  - Teaching. *The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer. If you point these things out to the brothers and sisters, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished on the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed. Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance. That is why we labor and strive, because*

we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all people, and especially of those who believe. Command and teach these things. (4:1-11)
    - Some people will *abandon the faith.*
        - *hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.*
        - They try to add to the faith or make it more mystical or mysterious.
        - They even claim at times to have a 'revelation' that other people do not have.
    - Paul challenged Timothy (and us), *If you point these things out to the brothers and sisters, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus…Command and teach these things.*
    - He also warned, *Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales… we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all people, and especially of those who believe.*
- Praxis. *Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you. Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.* (4:12-16)
    - *set an example for the believers in:*
        - *Speech*
        - *Conduct*
        - *Love*
        - *Faith*
        - *Purity*
    - *devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.*
    - *Be diligent in these matters*
    - *Watch your life and doctrine closely.*
- The Generations. *Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.* (5:1)
- Benevolence. *Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need. But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying*

their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God. The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help. But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives. Give the people these instructions, so that no one may be open to blame. Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty, has been faithful to her husband, and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the Lord's people, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds. As for younger widows, do not put them on such a list. For when their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ, they want to marry. Thus they bring judgment on themselves, because they have broken their first pledge. Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also busybodies who talk nonsense, saying things they ought not to. So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander. Some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan. If any woman who is a believer has widows in her care, she should continue to help them and not let the church be burdened with them, so that the church can help those widows who are really in need. (5:3-16)

    - Widows in the first century were often found in dire situations, homeless, unable to buy food, and dependent on the kindness of others.
    - This could just as easily apply to the benevolent ministries of the church today.
- Elders. *The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For Scripture says, "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages." Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses. But those elders who are sinning you are to reprove before everyone, so that the others may take warning. I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism.* (5:17-21)
    - *Elders* can describe those who have lived a long life, as well as those who have walked in the faith for a long time.

    - The church is to honor and respect those who exhibit long-term spiritual faithfulness.
- Paul gave some specifics for Timothy. *Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure. Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses. The sins of some are obvious, reaching the place of judgment ahead of them; the sins of others trail behind them. In the same way, good deeds are obvious, and even those that are not obvious cannot remain hidden forever.* (5:22-24)
- Employees. *All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their masters worthy of full respect, so that God's name and our teaching may not be slandered. Those who have believing masters should not show them disrespect just because they are fellow believers. Instead, they should serve them even better because their masters are dear to them as fellow believers and are devoted to the welfare of their slaves. These are the things you are to teach and insist on.* (6:1-2a)
    - Because most slavery in the first century was related to bankruptcy, this teaching can be applied to modern day employees.
    - Mutual respect is the guiding point.
- False Teachers and Money. *If anyone teaches otherwise and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, they are conceited and understand nothing. They have an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between people of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain. But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.* (6:2b-10)
    - False teachers were a problem in the first century and they are still a problem today.
        - *they are conceited and understand nothing*
        - *They have an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and*

constant friction between people of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth

- False teaching is often about making money.
    - They *think that godliness is a means to financial gain*
    - *Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.*
    - *Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.*

- A final charge. *But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in his own time—God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen. Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life. Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have departed from the faith. Grace be with you all.* (6:11-21)
    - *pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness*
    - *Fight the good fight of the faith*
    - *Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called*
    - *Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God*
        - *do good*

        - *be rich in good deeds*
        - *be generous*
    - *guard what has been entrusted to your care*
    - *Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge*

Titus

- 1st & 2nd Timothy and Titus are collectively known as the "Pastoral Epistles."
- The Book of Titus was written about 64AD after Paul had been released from prison in Rome, the same time he wrote 1st Timothy.
- Titus was a Gentile convert (Galatians 2:3) and traveled with Paul. He was in Crete when this letter was written.

Outline

- Salutation (1). *Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ to further the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness—in the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time, and which now at his appointed season he has brought to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Savior, To Titus, my true son in our common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.* (1:1-4)
- Church Organization (1).
    - Leadership. *The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer manages God's household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.* (1:5-9)
        - Paul left Titus in Crete because the churches there were a mess.
        - In order to organize the churches effectively and deal with false teaching Paul wanted Titus to *appoint elders in every town*. An elder had to be:
            - *blameless*
            - *faithful to his wife*
            - *A good father*

- *not overbearing*
- *not quick-tempered*
- *not given to drunkenness*
- *not violent*
- *not pursuing dishonest gain*
- *hospitable*
- *one who loves what is good*
- *self-controlled*
- *upright*
- *holy*
- *disciplined.*
- *He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.*

- Dealing with Disruption. *For there are many rebellious people, full of meaningless talk and deception, especially those of the circumcision group. They must be silenced, because they are disrupting whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach—and that for the sake of dishonest gain. One of Crete's own prophets has said it: "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons." This saying is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the merely human commands of those who reject the truth. To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.* (1:10-16)
  - There were many rebellious people in Crete.
    - Cretans were known as liars, evil brutes, and lazy gluttons.
    - The Judaizers were active in the local churches.
  - Because of the rough environment Paul encouraged Titus to *rebuke them sharply so that they will be sound in the faith.*
  - *To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure.*

- Practical Church Ministry (2-3).
  - *You, however, must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine.* (2:1)
    - Men. *Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love*

and in endurance. (2:2)
    - Women. *Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.* (2:3-5)
    - Young People. *Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.* (2:6-8)
    - Slaves (employees). *Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.* (2:9-10)
- *For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.* (2:11-15)
    - Civil duties. *Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and always to be gentle toward everyone.* (3:1-2)
    - Before and After. *At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy*

Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. (3:3-7)

- Do what is good. *This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.* (3:8)
- Avoid foolish arguments. *But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. Warn a divisive person once, and then warn them a second time. After that, have nothing to do with them. You may be sure that such people are warped and sinful; they are self-condemned.* (3:9-11)

- Final Remarks. *As soon as I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, because I have decided to winter there. Do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way and see that they have everything they need. Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order to provide for urgent needs and not live unproductive lives. Everyone with me sends you greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all.* (3:12-15)

2nd Timothy

- 2nd Timothy was written about 67AD, roughly three years after 1st Timothy, while Paul was back in prison in Rome awaiting execution. Timothy was still the pastor of the church in Ephesus.
- This is the last letter written by Paul before he was beheaded about 68AD.

OUTLINE

- Salutation (1).
    - *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, in keeping with the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus, To Timothy, my dear son: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.* (1:1-2)
    - Personal Thanks. *I thank God, whom I serve, as my ancestors did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.* (1:3-5)

- A Personal Appeal (1).
    - The Gospel. *For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God. He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.* (1:6-10)
        - As he often did, Paul worked the message of the Gospel into the early part of this letter.
        - *For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.*
    - Loyalty to Paul. *And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day. What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. You know that everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes. May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. On the contrary, when he was in Rome, he searched hard for me until he found me. May the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day! You know very well in how many ways he helped me in Ephesus.* (1:11-18)
        - Paul seems to know the end of his life is near.
            - *I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day.*
            - *Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you*
        - It seems that many had deserted Paul in his time of need because they were ashamed that he was in prison. He named *Phygelus and Hermogenes* among those.

        - *Onesiphorus* may have been among the 72 disciples set aside by Jesus in Luke 10. He went to Rome and found Paul in order to help him during his imprisonment.
- A Practical Appeal (2).
    - Keep the faith. *You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer. Similarly, anyone who competes as an athlete does not receive the victor's crown except by competing according to the rules. The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops. Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this. Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God's word is not chained. Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.* (2:1-10)
        - *the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others*
        - *Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead*
    - Focus on truth. *Keep reminding God's people of these things. Warn them before God against quarreling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen. Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have departed from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some. Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness."* (2:14-19)
        - *Keep reminding God's people of these things*
        - *Warn them… against quarreling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen*

        - *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth*
        - *Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly*
        - Then he specifically mentions *Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have departed from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some.*
    - Special and common. *In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for special purposes and some for common use. Those who cleanse themselves from the latter will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.* (2:20-21)
        - Some things in life are *special* (sacred) and some things in life are *common* (secular).
        - Only God makes us holy - *instruments for special purposes.*
    - The Lord's Servant. *Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.* (2:22-26)
        - If we are going to serve the Lord we must:
            - Grow up. *Flee the evil desires of youth*
            - *pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace*
            - *Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments*
            - *be kind to everyone*
            - *able to teach*
            - *not resentful*
        - This is daily Christian living in praxis.
- Warning About the Last Days (3-4).
    - What the last days will be like. *But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of*

godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people. They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over gullible women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, always learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these teachers oppose the truth. They are men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected. But they will not get very far because, as in the case of those men, their folly will be clear to everyone. (3:1-9)

- *There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be:*
    - *lovers of themselves*
    - *lovers of money*
    - *Boastful*
    - *Proud*
    - *Abusive*
    - *disobedient to their parents*
    - *Ungrateful*
    - *Unholy*
    - *without love*
    - *Unforgiving*
    - *Slanderous*
    - *without self-control*
    - *Brutal*
    - *not lovers of the good*
    - *Treacherous*
    - *Rash*
    - *Conceited*
    - *lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God*
    - *having a form of godliness but denying its power*
- *Have nothing to do with such people.*

- How to respond in the last days.
    - Keep the faith. *You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have*

known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (3:10-17)

- *continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of*
- *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

- Praxis. *In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.* (4:1-5)
  - *Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season*
  - *correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction*
  - Remember *the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.*
  - *keep your head in all situations*
  - *endure hardship*
  - *do the work of an evangelist*
  - *discharge all the duties of your ministry.*

- Paul's final remarks. (4).
  - *For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on*

that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing. (4:6-8)

- Paul knows his time is short, but what an epitaph he wrote!
- *I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.*

- *Do your best to come to me quickly, for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry. I sent Tychicus to Ephesus. When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments. Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done. You too should be on your guard against him, because he strongly opposed our message. At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.* (4:9-18)
  - We see the personal relationship between Paul and Timothy in Paul's words.
    - *Do your best to come to me quickly*
    - *When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments.*
  - He specifically mentioned:
    - *Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica*
    - *Crescens has gone to Galatia*
    - *Titus to Dalmatia.*
    - *Luke is with me.*
    - *Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.*
    - *I sent Tychicus to Ephesus.*
    - *Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done.*

        - *At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them.*
        - *When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments. You too should be on your guard against him, because he strongly opposed our message.*
- *Greet Priscilla and Aquila and the household of Onesiphorus. Erastus stayed in Corinth, and I left Trophimus sick in Miletus. Do your best to get here before winter. Eubulus greets you, and so do Pudens, Linus, Claudia and all the brothers and sisters. The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you all.* (4:19-22)