

# The Essential 100

---

## A Bible overview plan for 2011-2012

The Essential 100 (E100) is a systematic approach that guides readers through the big picture of the Bible. It is a carefully selected list of short Bible passages—50 from the Old Testament and 50 from the New Testament. The passages are usually one to two chapters in length and can easily be read in 10 minutes or less.

One-page plan: Each testament is broken up into ten, five-week series. We will move from Old to New Testaments every five weeks. My goal is to teach three of the five lessons in every series.

The E100 in Sunday school: We will REAP (read, explain, apply, and personalize) one passage each week and finish a series every five weeks. Each lesson will include a key verse for memorization. At the end of two years, we will have covered the essential 100 passages in the Bible.

Additional information: To learn more about The E100 program and to obtain additional resources, visit [e100challenge.com](http://e100challenge.com). Our Sunday school website is [stuartheights.org/sundayschool](http://stuartheights.org/sundayschool).

## The Schedule: In the Beginning

Date	Lesson	Key Verse(s)	Passage	Speaker
January 2	Creation	Genesis 1:1	Genesis 1-2	Jim Fleming
January 9	The Fall	Genesis 3:1	Genesis 3	Jim Fleming
January 16	The Flood	Genesis 6:17	Genesis 6-7	Barry Cole
January 23	God's Covenant with Noah	Genesis 9:8-11	Genesis 8-9:17	David Barber
January 30	The Tower of Babel	Genesis 11:5-7	Genesis 11:1-9	Jim Fleming

## Sunday school class timeline

8:50: Breakfast ready (January 9: open, January 16: open, January 23: Goble/Archer, January 30: open)

9:07: Announcements (let me know prior to a Sunday if you have an announcement)

9:10: Lesson

9:40: Prayer requests at each table

9:45: Dismiss

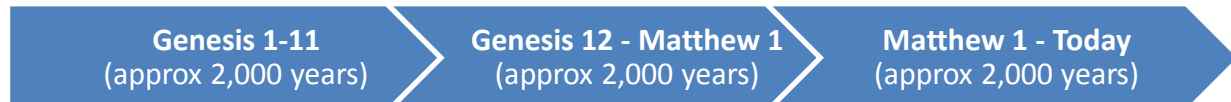
9:50: Room cleared

# In the Beginning: Creation

---

## Preview: Meet the Author

Hebrew literature is often written irrespective of time—making it difficult to follow from a timeline perspective. There are two perspectives on creation: The big picture (**Genesis 1:1-2:3**) and the human-interest story (**Genesis 2:4-25**). However, the focus is not the timeline; the focus is introducing us to God. This is the happiest story in the Bible because everything is made perfect and complete (no sin).



Things to look out for that tell us about God: (1) He sets the stage for the rest of the Bible (“**and it was so**”), (2) He takes the **initiative**, (3) He **fills**, (4) He **inspects**, and (5) He is pleased

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Genesis 1-2 (Author = Moses)

### Genesis 1

**1 In the beginning God** [the Hebrew is *elohim*—a plural name for God indicating multiple persons] **created** [*ex nihilo*—out of **nothing**] **the heavens and the earth.** **2 The earth was without form** [formless, chaotic, a wasteland], **and void** [empty]; **and darkness was** [in the NKJV, KJV, and NASB, words in italic type have been **added** for clarity—they are not found in the original languages)] **on** [hovered over] **the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.**

**3 Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light.** **4 And God saw** [looked at, inspected] **the light, that it was good** [good, pleasant, agreeable, beneficial]; **and God divided the light from the darkness.** **5 God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening** [only used of one night] **and the morning** [only used of one day] **were the first day.**

**6 Then God said, “Let there be a firmament** [an extended solid surface that supported the heavens] **in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.”** **7 Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so.** **8 And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day.**

**9 Then God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear”; and it was so.** **10 And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that it was good.**

**11 Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth grass** [grass, vegetation], **the herb** [herbs, green plants] **that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth”; and it was so.** **12 And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its**

kind, and the tree *that* yields fruit, whose seed *is* in itself according to its kind. And God saw that *it was good*. **13** So the evening and the morning were the third day.

**14** Then God said, “Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; **15** and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth”; and it was so. **16** Then God made two great [intense] lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. *He made the stars also* [estimates say there are  $10^{24}$  stars; there are only  $10^{19}$  grains of sand in the earth (according to the University of Hawaii), so there are ~10,000 stars for every grain of sand on the earth]. **17** God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, **18** and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that *it was good*. **19** So the evening and the morning were the fourth day. [David Guzik: Many have great difficulty on how the sun, moon, and stars could be created on the fourth day, when light (including day and night) was created on the first day. . . . Revelation tells us of a coming day when we won't need the sun, moon, and stars any longer (Revelation 21:23). There's no reason why God couldn't have started creation in the same way He will end it.]

**20** Then God said, “Let the waters abound [teem with, swarm] with an abundance of living creatures [insects, animals, small reptiles, quadrupeds], and let birds [birds and winged insects] fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens.” **21** So God created great sea creatures [literally, dragons] and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that *it was good*. **22** And God blessed them [pronounced a blessing over them], saying, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” **23** So the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

**24** Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle [representative of domesticated animals] and creeping thing and beast [literally, ‘alive’] of the earth, *each* according to its kind”; and it was so. **25** And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that *it was good*.

**26** Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image [image, likeness, resemblance—the Hebrew root word is, ‘shade,’ so the idea is that man is a shadow of God], according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” [Note that God did not give us dominion over anything outside the earth] **27** So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. **28** Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful [imperative #1: reproduce] and multiply [imperative #2: multiply]; fill the earth [imperative #3: fill] and subdue it [imperative #4: subdue]; have dominion [imperative #5: rule—we (man) is to win/dominate over nature] over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

**29** And God said, “See, I have given you every herb *that* yields seed which *is* on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food [man was originally designed to be vegetarian—this was modified after the Flood]. **30** Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which *there is* life, *I have given* every green herb for food” [animals were originally designed to be vegetarian]; and it was so. **31** Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed *it was* very [exceedingly, abundantly] good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

## Genesis 2

**1** Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. **2** And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested [active abstaining from work] on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. **3** Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it [set it apart], because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

**4** This *is* the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, **5** before any plant of the field was in the earth and before any herb of the field had grown. For the LORD [first use of the tetragrammaton] God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and *there was* no man to till [laboriously work] the ground; **6** but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.

**7** And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils [nose, face] the breath of life [literally, ‘the spirit of being alive’]; and man became a living being [soul, self, life, creature, person, appetite, mind, living being, desire, emotion, passion].

**8** The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden [‘pleasure,’ ‘luxury,’ or ‘delight’], and there He put the man whom He had formed. **9** And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life *was* also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

**10** Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four riverheads. **11** The name of the first *is* Pishon [‘increase’]; *it is* the one which skirts the whole land of Havilah, where *there is* gold. **12** And the gold of that land *is* good. Bdelium [gum resin] and the onyx stone *are* there. **13** The name of the second river *is* Gihon [‘bursting forth’]; *it is* the one which goes around the whole land of Cush. **14** The name of the third river *is* Hiddekel [‘rapid’]; *it is* the one which goes toward the east of Assyria. The fourth river *is* the Euphrates [‘fruitfulness’]. [Note: It is useless to try to determine the exact location of the Garden of Eden because the Flood changed everything—these rivers may or may not even exist today]

**15** Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend [work] and keep [protect, guard] it. **16** And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; **17** but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”



**18** And the LORD God said, “*It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper* [one who helps] *comparable to him.*” **19** Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought *them* to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that *was* its name. **20** So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.

**21** And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. **22** Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought [led] her to the man. [David Guzik: We also know the Bride of Christ comes from the wound made in the side of the second Adam, Jesus Christ]

**23** And Adam said:

“This is now bone of my bones

And flesh of my flesh;

She shall be called Woman,

Because she was taken out of Man.” [The first recorded words out of Adam’s mouth were **poetry**]

**24** Therefore a man shall leave [let go and leave] his father and mother and be joined to [stick with and join] his wife, and they shall become one flesh [one body]. [Note: Marriage is **becoming** what God has already **created**—very similar to the related concept involved in salvation where God declares us righteous at the moment of salvation, but in reality we are becoming like Jesus Christ during the process of sanctification (becoming what God has already created).]

**25** And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. Our words should be trustworthy
2. Taking initiative is being like God
3. Emptiness is not part of God’s design
4. Inspecting good work is pleasing

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Acknowledge that God created it all and that it is all about Him
2. Understand that I am not God
3. Realize that if I want to know God, I must **know** His book

# In the Beginning: The Fall

---

## Review of last week: Meet the Author

Review of last week: God set the stage for the rest of the Bible by showing us that He was trustworthy, He takes initiative, He fills, He inspects, and He is pleased.

## Preview: Eyes Wide Open (to sin)

The key thought for today's lesson: **Sin** has a profound effect on our relationships with God and others.

Things to look out for that tell us about God: (1) He **leaves** man alone (free will), (2) He **questions**, (3) He judges, (4) He intervenes, and (5) He **provides**. This is one of the saddest Biblical accounts—an epic fail.

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Genesis 3 (Author = Moses)

**1 Now the serpent** [snake; **Ezekiel 28:13-19**, **Revelation 12:9** and **Revelation 20:2** tell us that this was, in fact, the Devil/Satan] **was more cunning** [subtle, shrewd, prudent, crafty, sly, sensible—this word is used both positively and negatively in the Bible, but **2 Corinthians 11:3** tell us that this was why he was able to deceive Eve] **than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said** [no 'hidden' Hebrew meaning—the snake just talked—makes me wonder if other animals could speak at this time] **to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"** [This is not questioning God's word in order to prove it is true, this is questioning in order to deceive]

**2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; 3 but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden** [this tree had a name—why did she not use it?], **God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'"** [Eve **added** to what God said.]

**4 Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. [False] 5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."** [True]

**6 So when the woman saw** [saw, inspected, perceived] **that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant** [pleasant, desirable] **to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise** [insightful, prudent, comprehend things; this is the same order as the sin presented in **1 John 2:16b: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life**], **she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked** [result of sin: **innocence lost**]; **and they sewed fig leaves together** [they tried to work to compensate for their sin—some things have not changed] **and made themselves coverings** [girdles or loincloths].

**8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool** [literally, windy part] **of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves** [literally, to draw back, then to draw together, then to harden—they stuck together, but it was to avoid God and not to go to God; result of sin: **hiding**] **from the presence of the LORD God among** [in the middle of] **the trees of the garden.** [Man used trees to try to save himself. It is interesting that 4,000 years later God would use trees to save man by way of Jesus on the cross. The only way we can save ourselves is not to save ourselves—Jesus already did that.]

**9 Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, “Where *are* you?”** [In Hebrew, the question is literally one word—ah (pronounced: eye’-yu), which means, “Where?”]

**10 So he [Adam] said, “I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid [result of sin: **fear**] because I was naked; and I hid myself.”**

**11 And He [God—notice the capitalized word—some translations do this] said, “Who told you that you *were* naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?”**

**12 Then the man said, “The woman whom You gave *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.”** [result of sin: **avoidance**]

**13 And the LORD God said to the woman, “What *is* this you have done?”**  
**The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”** [result of sin: **blame**]

**14 So the LORD God said to the serpent:** [David Guzik: God didn't ask Satan any questions, because there was nothing to teach him.]

“Because you have done this,  
You *are* cursed more than all cattle,  
And more than every beast of the field;  
On your belly you shall go [which implies that the serpent did not go on its belly before],  
And you shall eat dust  
All the days of your life. [result of sin: lower **status** (to the animal, not the Devil)]

**15 And I will put enmity [hatred]**  
**Between you and the woman,**  
**And between your seed and her Seed** [Seed (capital ‘S’) of a woman—this will be important later];  
**He shall bruise [bruise, crush, strike] your head [a mortal wound],**  
**And you shall bruise [bruise, crush, strike] His heel.”** [a flesh wound, to the Devil, not the animal]

**16 To the woman He said:**  
“I will greatly multiply your sorrow [labor, pain] and your conception [pregnancy];  
In pain you shall bring forth children; [result of sin: **pain**]  
Your desire [desire, longing, craving] **shall be for your husband** [a woman’s desire for her husband is from God putting it in her by nature, a man’s desire for his wife is from God putting it in him by grace],  
And he shall rule [rule, have dominion, reign] over you.”

**17 Then to Adam He said, “Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’:**

“Cursed *is* the ground for your sake; [result of sin: cursed **earth**]  
In toil [labor, pain—same word used in **Genesis 3:16**] you shall eat of it  
All the days of your life.

**18 Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you,**  
**And you shall eat the herb of the field.**

**19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread**

**Till you return to the ground,  
For out of it you were taken;  
For dust you are,  
And to dust you shall return.”** [result of sin: **death**]

**20 And Adam** [man, root word means, red] **called his wife’s name Eve** [life, living], **because she was the mother of all living.**

**21 Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics** [long, shirt-like undergarments] **of skin, and clothed** [dressed] **them.** [The skin of what? An animal. Result of sin: when I sin, something has to **bleed**.]

**22 Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever”— 23 therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till [work] the ground from which he was taken.**

**24 So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim** [ends in ‘im,’ so there are multiple beings fulfilling this; cherubim are angelic beings that surround the throne of God and are also modeled on top of the ark of the covenant] **at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way** [road, way, path] **to the tree of life.** [result of sin: **separation**; **David Guzik: In mercy, God was protecting Adam and Eve from the horrible fate of having to live forever as sinners by prohibiting them from eating from the tree of life.** For more on what really happened in this chapter, read **Romans 5**—but it will break your heart.]

How does Jesus deal with the results of sin? He takes care of all of them.

**Result of sin (not a comprehensive list)**

- Innocence lost
- Hiding from God
- Fear
- Avoidance
- Blame
- Lower status
- Pain
- Cursed earth
- Death
- Something has to bleed
- Separation

**Jesus’ action**

- Innocence restored (**2 Corinthians 5:17**)
- Hiding in God (**Colossians 3:3**)
- No fear (**Luke 12:7**)
- Acceptance (**Matthew 11:28**)
- Blameless (**1 Corinthians 1:7-8**)
- Raised status (**1 Corinthians 15:52**)
- No pain (**Revelation 21:4**)
- New earth (**Revelation 21:1**)
- Newness of life (**Romans 6:4**)
- Jesus’ blood being shed (**Luke 22:20**)
- No separation (**Ephesians 2:14**)

**Apply (What is the point?)**

1. **Sin** changed everything
2. God intervenes
3. Jesus **saves**

**Personalize (What do I do with that?)**

1. Acknowledge that I am a sinner
2. Acknowledge that God is still intervening
3. Trust Jesus (say no to sin and yes to Jesus)

# In the Beginning: The Flood

---

## Preview: Eyes Wide Shut (to God)

This story is one of the most talked-about stories in the entire Bible.

The key thought for today's lesson: **Sin** has a profound effect on our relationships with God and others.

Things to look out for that tell us about God: (1) He **leaves** man alone (free will), (2) He **questions**, (3) He judges, (4) He intervenes, and (5) He **provides**

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Genesis 6-7 (Author = Moses)

**6:3** God was **fed up** (**Leviticus 18:1, 6-26**: this is a short list of things that God said He would destroy land over—the overall theme is sex)

**6:5** God saw that man was **evil**

All was corrupt. Religion was gone. The wickedness continually increased so that the whole earth was corrupt before God, and was, “**filled with violence**” (**Genesis 6:11b**). All thoughts and imaginations were evil with no mixture of good. Every perception, conception, and ideas that formed were all evil and they were evil all the time.

**6:6** God was **sorry**

This (“**it grieved his heart**”) is one of the saddest comments made in the Bible. To be sorry, one has to have certain expectations. Did God expect man to be any different from the wicked? Did God not see this coming? The Bible was not written for God, it was written for man and so it is written from the perspective of man's understanding. **1 Corinthians 13:12a**: **For now we see in a mirror, dimly**. God uses language that we understand and that man was doing grieved the Holy Spirit. He was not sorry he made us, he was sorry for what we chose to become.

**6:8** Noah was **different**

Question: Who were Noah's contemporaries? We are not sure as they are not named.

The scripture referring to Noah walking in faith is also in **Genesis 6:9**: **This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God.**

To answer the question, “What does it mean to walk with God?” look at **Hebrews 11:5-7**: **5 By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, “and was not found, because God had taken him”; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. 6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. 7 By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.** You walk with God by faith.

Enoch and Noah believed (had faith in) God and what He said. Anyone who believes and obeys God walks with Him. Obedience is evident when one lives by God's commandments. If we do not obey, we do not have faith and are not walking with God. The following verses make it abundantly plain about what it takes to know, love and walk with God:

**1 John 2:3-6: 3 Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. 6 He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.**

**1 John 5:2-3: 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.**

But remember, God picked Noah because God wanted to pick Noah. It was divine grace, not man's effort. Noah was a sinner. This was a work of grace.

**6:13** God told Noah **it's all over**

God told Noah that everything must die, save Noah, his family, and a few animals. God gave Noah some very precise instructions. What would we do if in our prayer time God gave us some instructions like this: **Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch. And this is how you shall make it: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. You shall make a window for the ark, and you shall finish it to a cubit from above; and set the door of the ark in its side. You shall make it with lower, second, and third decks (Genesis 6:14-16).**

Some fun facts about the ark: (from Christian Information Ministries)

1. **Construction material:** The Bible says it was to be built of gopher wood. Gopher is the actual Hebrew word. Some translate it as cypress or even teak. Nobody really knows.
2. **The design:** The Biblical word for "ark" is "tebah." The only other time that word is used is for the container in which Moses was hidden among the bulrushes. The longest wooden vessel ever built was 360' in length and was not seaworthy. God gave the measurements in cubits. There are two types of cubits, Egyptian Royal and Hebrew. The Egyptian cubit is about 3" longer than a Hebrew cubit. Noah's ark was approximately 450' long x 75' wide x 45' tall. Modern day ship builders use a 6x1 ratio. For every 6' of length, a boat must be 1' wide for seaworthiness and a safe righting arm. By these measurements the Ark would have to have been tilted over 90 degrees in order to capsize. According to God's instructions, Noah's ark was built to these specifications. The ark had three stories and only one door. It was coated inside and out with pitch to waterproof and prevent decay. In addition, to build "rooms."
3. **The volume:** With the size of the ark, the internal volume would have been in the neighborhood of 1,518,750 cubic feet, or about 569 railroad boxcars.

4. **The cargo:** 2 Peter 2:5 says eight souls were saved. In Genesis 6:19, Noah is told to bring mated pairs of every kind of bird, every kind of animal, and every kind of creature that moves along the ground. In Genesis 7:2, God is more specific by telling Noah to bring seven mated pairs of clean animals and seven pairs of all birds. Today there are less than 18,000 species of mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians. If we double this to allow for extinction and add for the clean animals, we get something near 75,000 animals. The average size of life on earth currently is the size of sheep. The ark's volume could hold 125,000 sheep. God also told Noah to bring enough food for everyone and everything.

6:14 Noah said **yes Lord**

Noah did not ask for a sign. Noah did not wait for some sort of confirmation. Noah did not take it to a committee. He did not even ask Mrs. Noah.

7:5 Noah **did everything** God commanded

7:13 God **shut the door**

There was only one door. There was only one way in to be saved from destruction. In John 10:9, Jesus says, **I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.**

7:17 It **rained**

After seven days of being on the ark, it started to rain for 40 days and nights. Not only rain but also, **"the fountains of the great deep were broken up"** (Genesis 7:11). Not only did it rain but also the landscape drastically changed. The perfect earth the God had created for the enjoyment of man changed all because of that little three-letter word: sin.

Why did God pick Noah?

How did Noah respond to God?

Luke 17:26: when it is like this, Jesus is coming back

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. Sin **corrupted** everything
2. God intervenes
3. Jesus **saves**

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Like Noah, are you surrounded by sin?
2. How do you resist temptation?
3. Does God still judge today?

## For further reflection

Despite the world devolving into horrendous evil so wicked that His only recourse is destruction, “God remembers Noah.” The, “**Seed of woman**,” (**Genesis 3:15**) will not be completely annihilated, an event that would render God’s promise of a Savior void.

## Chiasmus (inverted parallelism)

A little Hebrew poetry, chiasmus, to which Jim frequently refers:

A Noah (**6:10a**)

\_\_\_ B Shem, Ham, and Japheth (**6:10b**)

\_\_\_ C Ark to be built (**6:14-16**)

\_\_\_ D Flood announced (**6:17**)

\_\_\_ E Covenant with Noah (**6:18-20**)

\_\_\_ F Food in the ark (**6:21**)

\_\_\_ G Command to enter the ark (**7:1-3**)

\_\_\_ H 7 days waiting for flood (**7:4-5**)

\_\_\_ I 7 days waiting for flood (**7:7-10**)

\_\_\_ J Entry to ark (**7:11-15**)

\_\_\_ K YHWH shuts Noah in (**7:16**)

\_\_\_ L 40 days flood (**7:17a**)

\_\_\_ M Waters increase (**7:17b-18**)

\_\_\_ N Mountains covered (**7:19-20**)

\_\_\_ O 150 days water prevail (**7:21-24**)

\_\_\_ P God remembers Noah (**8:1**)

\_\_\_ O' 150 days waters abate (**8:3**)

\_\_\_ N' Mountain tops visible (**8:4-5**)

\_\_\_ M' Waters abate (**8:5**)

\_\_\_ L' 40 days (end of) (**8:6a**)

\_\_\_ K' Noah opens window of ark (**8:6b**)

\_\_\_ J' Raven and dove leave ark (**8:7-9**)

\_\_\_ I' 7 days waiting for waters to subside (**8:10-11**)

\_\_\_ H' 7 days waiting for waters to subside (**8:12-13**)

\_\_\_ G' Command to leave ark (**8:15-17, 22**)

\_\_\_ F' Food outside ark (**9:1-4**)

\_\_\_ E' Covenant with all flesh (**9:8-10**)

\_\_\_ D' No flood in the future (**9:11-17**)

\_\_\_ C' Ark (**9:18a**)

\_\_\_ B' Shem, Ham and Japheth (**9:18b**)

A' Noah (**9:19**)



## Additional Resources

Safety investigation of Noah's Ark in a seaway

(<http://www.answersingenesis.org/tj/v8/i1/noah.asp?vPrint=1>)

The Flood (<http://bible.org/print/book/export/html/4837>)

Noah's Ark and the Flood - Bible Story Summary

(<http://christianity.about.com/od/biblestorysummaries/p/noahsarkflood.htm>)

Was there rain on the earth before Noah's Flood? (<http://www.biblestudy.org/question/was-there-rain-on-the-earth-before-the-flood.html>)

Was Noah's Ark big enough to hold all the animals? (<http://www.biblestudy.org/basicart/was-noah-ark-big-enough-to-hold-all-animals.html>)

Facts on Noah's Ark (<http://ldolphin.org/cisflood.html>)

Enoch Walked with God (<http://www.puritansermons.com/sermons/griffin6.htm>)

The Global Flood of Noah's Day (<http://www.icr.org/article/global-flood-noahs-day/>)

Noah's Ark - A Generation Lost (<http://www.harvestbaptistcincy.org/biblical-look-at-current-events/37-a-generation-lost>)

The Flood ([http://www.westmissionarychurch.com/Bible\\_Study8.pdf](http://www.westmissionarychurch.com/Bible_Study8.pdf))

Bible Study: The Chiasm in Noah's Flood (<http://www.momblognetwork.com/spiritual-religion/bible-study-chiasm-noahs-flood-0>)

In Defense of . . . the Genesis Flood [Part 1] (<http://apologeticspress.org/articles/104>)

In Defense of . . . the Genesis Flood [Part 2] (<http://apologeticspress.org/articles/106>)

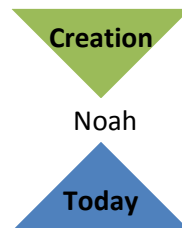
# In the Beginning: God's Covenant with Noah

---

## Preview: Never Again

**Key Thought:** God's **love** overcomes our sin (**Genesis 8:1-9:17**)

**Overview:** Noah and his family were free from the smelly **ark**, but were they free from the stench of **sin**? Unfortunately the answer is no, as Noah seems to understand (**Genesis 8:20**). God knows the reality of sin, but that is what makes His promise to Noah even more poignant (**Genesis 9:8-17**). "Even though" God knows human beings are hopeless sinners (**Genesis 8:21**), "never again," will He consider destroying them (**Genesis 8:21; 9:11, 15**). At this point, a **rainbow** would be the symbol of His love. Later He would say it in **Person**. The fact that Noah gets two lessons in the Essential 100 should relay the importance of Noah's life. Noah's family was the funnel through which God pared down the human race.



## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Genesis 8-9:17 (Author = Moses)

### Genesis 8

**1** Then God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals that *were* with him in the ark. And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided. **2** The fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were also stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained. **3** And the waters receded continually from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters decreased. **4** Then the ark rested in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat. **5** And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month. In the tenth *month*, on the first *day* of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.

**6** So it came to pass, at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made. **7** Then he sent out a raven, which kept going to and fro until the waters had dried up from the earth. **8** He also sent out from himself a dove, to see if the waters had receded from the face of the ground. **9** But the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, and she returned into the ark to him, for the waters *were* on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her, and drew her into the ark to himself. **10** And he waited yet another seven days, and again he sent the dove out from the ark. **11** Then the dove came to him in the evening, and behold, a freshly plucked olive leaf *was* in her mouth; and Noah knew that the waters had receded from the earth. **12** So he waited yet another seven days and sent out the dove, which did not return again to him anymore.

**13** And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year, in the first *month*, the first *day* of the month, that the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked,

and indeed the surface of the ground was dry. **14** And in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dried.

**15** Then God spoke to Noah, saying, **16** "Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. **17** Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that *is* with you: birds and cattle and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, so that they may abound on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth." **18** So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. **19** Every animal, every creeping thing, every bird, *and* whatever creeps on the earth, according to their families, went out of the ark.

**20** Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. **21** And the LORD smelled a soothing aroma. Then the LORD said in His heart, "I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart *is* evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done.

**22** "While the earth remains,  
Seedtime and harvest,  
Cold and heat,  
Winter and summer,  
And day and night  
Shall not cease."

## Genesis 9

**1** So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. **2** And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move *on* the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. **3** Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. **4** But you shall not eat flesh with its life, *that is*, its blood. **5** Surely for your lifeblood I will demand *a reckoning*; from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of man. From the hand of every man's brother I will require the life of man.

**6** "Whoever sheds man's blood,  
By man his blood shall be shed;  
For in the image of God  
He made man.

**7** And as for you, be fruitful and multiply;  
Bring forth abundantly in the earth  
And multiply in it."

**8** Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying: **9** "And as for Me, behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you, **10** and with every living creature that *is* with you: the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, of all that go out of the ark, every

beast of the earth. **11** Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth."

**12** And God said: "This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: **13** I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. **14** It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; **15** and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. **16** The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." **17** And God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth."

### Covenant Basics: (covenant = legally binding contract)

1. Covenant Theology: just **one way** to organize scripture (roots in Calvinism)
2. There are **four** major covenants (see reverse side of the handout)
3. Two types of covenants: conditional and **unconditional** covenants (Noahic Covenant is unconditional)

### Pre-Covenant:

1. Population estimate at the time of the flood: **10** billion
2. Sin is still very **real**. Noah recognized sin's existence and sacrificed (**Genesis 8:20**)
3. God recognized the **sinfulness** of man (**Genesis 8:21**)—the flood was God's confrontation of sin
4. Sinfulness of man associated to the **Earth**

Noah and his family had almost 400 days on the ark to think about what had happened.

### Noahic Covenant:

1. Blesses/Commands Noah and his sons to be **fruitful**, **multiply**, and populate (**Genesis 9:1-7**)
2. Places all **plants** and **animals** under human command (**Genesis 9:2-3**)
3. Forbids eating **meat** with the blood still in it (**Genesis 9:4**) (an emphasis on blood exists from here on to the end of the Bible—this continues to set the stage for the coming Messiah, eventually being fulfilled in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ)
4. Forbids **murder** (**Genesis 9:5**)
5. Says that violent men will be repaid by **violence** (**Genesis 9:6**)—God is drawing a line in the sand regarding blood
6. Promises that he will never again destroy all life on earth by **flood** (**Genesis 9:11**)
7. Creates the **rainbow** as the sign of this covenant for all ages to come (**Genesis 9:12-17**)
8. **Challenge**: God **promised** it (the covenant standard). Jesus **accomplished** it (the covenant standard). No Old Testament believer could fulfill this.
9. **The Greatest News**: The **New** Covenant in **Jesus Christ** (compare this covenant with the massive system God implemented to deal with sin)

- a. **Jesus'** sacrifice: our new covenant (**Matthew 26:26-28**: **26** And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." **27** Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. **28** For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.)
- b. **Jesus** is the fulfillment of all covenants (**Hebrews 8:6-13**: **6** But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. **7** For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. **8** Because finding fault with them, He says: "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— **9** not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD. **10** For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. **11** None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them. **12** For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." **13** In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.)

### Application (what does it mean?) & Personalization (what do I do with that?)

1. Biblical history is a massive example of the insufficiency of man to meet God's **standards**. The clear implication is that we will not make it on our own—we must have Jesus and the cross.
2. Some believe that all would **believe** if we could just find the Ark, but this is not true. See **Luke 16:19-31**, specifically **Luke 16:24-31**: **24** "Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' **25** But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. **26** And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.' **27** "Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, **28** for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' **29** Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' **30** And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' **31** But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets [i.e., the Bible], neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'"

## Major Covenants – Basics of Covenant Theology

### 1. Abrahamic Covenant ([Genesis 12:1-3](#))

**Parties:** God, Abraham and Abraham's "seed"

**Promises:** Land, "seed," blessing; "I will" type covenant

### 2. Mosaic Covenant ([Exodus 19:1-8](#))

**Parties:** God and the nation of Israel (the descendents of Abraham)

**Purpose:** set them apart as a kingdom of priests—fill them with His glory again ([Exodus 19:6](#))

**Promises:** Blessings for obedience, curses for disobedience ([Deuteronomy 28:1-6, 15-19](#))

**Nature:** Conditional and binding—Not "I will" but "if, then"

Ten Commandments = summary or "table of contents" for the hundreds of specific instructions

What commands? [Exodus 20:1-4, 7, 8, 12-17](#) (these are the foundation of the second covenant)

### 3. Davidic Covenant ([2 Samuel 7:8-16](#))

**Parties:** God, David, David's descendents

**Purpose:** Build a house and lineage for David, establishing his kingdom and throne forever

**Promises:** House (Davidic descendents), throne (right to rule), kingdom (a nation to rule)

**Nature:** irrevocable and everlasting promise—"I will" covenant—v 16 "forever"

We still have this overarching problem: enjoyment of the promises requires obedience, but no one wants to obey. Therefore, God adds a fourth and final covenant.

### 4. New Covenant ([Hebrews 8:8-1](#))

**Parties:** God, Israel, Judah

**Purpose:** Redemption of man. The Old Testament saints looked forward for the Messiah who would bring it. The New Testament saints looked backward. When does it begin? Death of Christ

**Promises:** spiritual enablement and physical blessings. Spiritual: New heart; sprinkled clean; God's Spirit; perfect obedience (ability and desire to obey). Physical: similar to Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenant promises

**Nature:** irrevocable and everlasting promise—"I will" covenant. [Ezekiel 37](#) calls it an "everlasting covenant." His blood inaugurates the New Covenant—celebrated in communion. All of the covenants set a standard and man falls short of all of the standards. The Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic covenants all look forward to the sacrifice of Christ. It is all about Jesus!

#### New Relationship to:

**Abrahamic:** Provides desire to obey and receive Abrahamic Covenant promises—problem fixed!

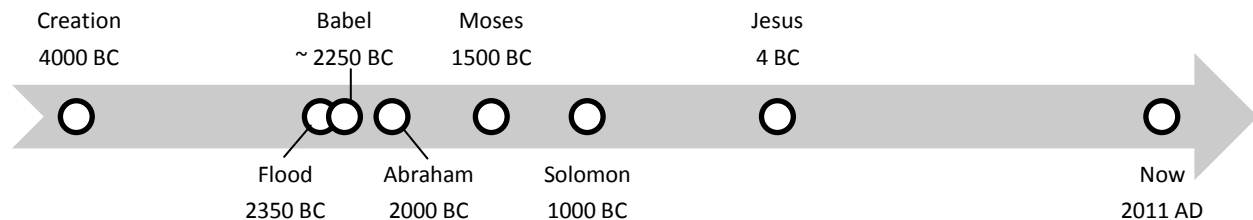
**Mosaic:** [Galatians 3:13](#): Christ's death fulfilled all of the Mosaic Covenant—He took all of its curses in our place—took one covenant and replaced it with the other. It is not a surprise, with New Covenant, we no longer need Mosaic Covenant!

**Davidic:** New Covenant provides a descendent of David to sit on the throne forever—the person who brings the New Covenant will be the eternal Davidic King (Jesus)

# In the Beginning: The Tower of Babel

## Review

So far, we have had lessons about Creation, the Fall, the Flood, and God's Covenant with Noah. Big thanks to Barry Cole and David Barber for teaching the past two weeks. Assuming a literal interpretation of the dates in the Bible, the following timeline is close.



Today's lesson probably takes place approximately 100 years after the Flood.

## Preview: Can we talk?

**Key Thought:** The greatest of all sins is **pride**

**Overview:** Ever since the Fall, humans had increasingly chosen to go their own way instead of God's way. The Tower of Babel became a defiant expression of pride. However, pride is not just a problem for "them." It infects us all. As we go through today's text, see if you see any parallels to your own life.

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Genesis 9:1-11 (Author = Moses)

As with prior passages in **Genesis**, **Genesis 11** probably did not follow **Genesis 10**, but is likely a sidebar to help make sense of **Genesis 10** (much like **Genesis 1**, **2**, and **3** are intertwined).

**1 Now the whole earth had one language** [literally, lip/edge] **and one speech** [speech, but also more broadly can be used for business/occupation]. **2 And it came to pass, as they** [they = all of humanity] **journeyed from the east, that they found a plain** [valley, plain] **in the land of Shinar** ['country of two rivers,' Babylonia or Chaldea], **and they dwelt there.**

Note: **Genesis 9:1** is still in effect ("**Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth**")—they were commanded to fill the **earth**, not to centralize in one place. However, I can relate to wanting to be around others for protection, community, etc. I want protection and cities bring a sense of that for me personally. The problem with that thinking, though, is that man is the source of our protection instead of God.

In retrospect, one would think that humanity would be passionate about following God seeing He wiped out the face of the earth about a hundred years prior. Sadly, this is not the case.

**3 Then they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks and bake *them* thoroughly.” They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar.**

Their determination to build this city and tower are illustrated by the fact that they decided to build it in a place without the appropriate natural resources. They, in effect, dug in where they were and decided to overcome their circumstances (e.g., lack of stone for building). Resolve is generally admirable, but in this instance it is entirely wrong. **Coffman:** [comparing the Fall and Babel] **The story is basically the same in both cases: “man’s defiance of God.” The setting, however, is different. The first Fall occurred among the flowers and fruits of Eden; the second one came in the bricks and asphalt of the city.**

**4 And they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top *is* in the heavens** [perhaps a literal goal, but this is more likely a figurative Hebrew expression meaning very tall (see **Deuteronomy 1:28; 9:1**)—many commentators feel that the tower was mankind’s attempt to secure protection against another flood, but this seems illogical to me given that they were building in a plain—if you want to protect yourself from a flood, build on a mountain]; **let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.”** [The real issue is that God was **never** considered or consulted. Many of us still make plans like this today. Man is not to make a name for himself, but to make a name for **God**—to reflect His glory, not to build monuments to our own.]

**5 But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built.** [This, in my opinion, is hilarious as some commentators joke that the implication is that God could not even see the tower from heaven and this was God mocking man (i.e., it was so small in His eyes).] **6 And the LORD said, “Indeed the people *are* one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them.** [This does not mean, obviously, that humanity could have built a tower to heaven (we know that to be impossible)—it is *probably* referring to the reaches to which their moral decay could get to.] **7 Come, let Us go down** [God was talking to God, not talking to the angels—He takes only His own counsel] **and there confuse** [mix, mingle—we call a party where the goal is to meet people a, ‘mixer’] **their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.” 8 So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city.**

Because they did not finish and because this was over 4,000 years ago, we cannot prove the location of the Tower of Babel. There are many claims, but there is simply no way to prove the location.

**9 Therefore its name is called Babel** [‘confusion’ (by mixing)], **because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.**

Step back for a moment: Have you ever wondered how humanity got all over the world? This is the answer. This is why there were people in America when the Europeans came over. This is why there are people on islands. God put them there. He will accomplish His plans—with our help or without it.

**Jessie Lewis: Can you imagine everybody panicking as they realized they no longer knew what their neighbors, or managers, or mothers, or just wandering the streets looking for anyone who might**



**Speak the same language?** Frustration, humiliation, and pain are always the result of **ignoring** God.

**Proverbs 13:15: Good understanding gains favor, But the way of the unfaithful is hard.**

Have you ever wondered why there are so many languages on the earth? This too, is the answer. So, how did God mix up the languages? **Coffman: Regarding the wonder of HOW God confounded the languages, we simply have no information whatever. The will of God alone was sufficient to produce the conditions that He desired to appear.**

It is interesting to note that the phrase, 'Tower of Babel' does not appear anywhere in the text ("a city, and a tower," appears).

### Application (what does it mean?)

1. **Unity** without proper direction is unprofitable (and unity at the expense of truth is worthless—we are called to be unified around the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ)
2. Planning without God's input is futile (**Genesis 11:3-4**)
3. Rebellion can occur anywhere (**David Guzik: Time, progress, government, and organization have made man better off, but not better**)
4. God **inspects** our work (**Genesis 11:5**)
5. A unified humanity is powerful (**Genesis 11:6**)—but with great **power** comes great responsibility
6. God **intervenes** (**Genesis 11:8-9**)

### Personalization (what do I do with that?)

1. Challenge: Turn your back on pride and turn in humility to God
2. Get unified around the things that **please** God. Two examples:
  - **Acts 2:4-11** seem to 'undo' what is done in **Genesis 11**—it brings people together again for a common understanding—this time around the truth of the Gospel of Jesus and not pride
  - EM: HE ([extremevisionhomes.com](http://extremevisionhomes.com)): Our role: Extreme **Prayer** Partnership

### Preview: Next series

**Genesis 1-11** marks the first great division of **Genesis** and the conclusion of our first of twenty five-week series. In our Essential 100 overview of the entire Bible, we will alternate every **five** weeks between the Old Testament and the New Testament. The first New Testament series begins next Sunday and will focus on, The Living Word—the early life of Jesus up to the point where He begins His ministry. Once we finish that series, we will come back to **Genesis** to look at Abraham, Isaac, and **Jacob**.

# The Essential 100

---

## A Bible overview plan for 2011-2012

The Essential 100 (E100) is a systematic approach that guides readers through the big picture of the Bible. It is a carefully selected list of short Bible passages—50 from the Old Testament and 50 from the New Testament. The passages are usually one to two chapters in length and can easily be read in 10 minutes or less.

One-page plan: Each testament is broken up into ten, five-week series. We will move from Old to New Testaments every five weeks. My goal is to teach three of the five lessons in every series.

The E100 in Sunday school: We will REAP (read, explain, apply, and personalize) one passage each week and finish a series every five weeks. Each lesson will include a key verse for memorization. At the end of two years, we will have covered the essential 100 passages in the Bible.

Additional information: To learn more about The E100 program and to obtain additional resources, visit [e100challenge.com](http://e100challenge.com). Our Sunday school website is [stuartheights.org/sundayschool](http://stuartheights.org/sundayschool).

## The Schedule: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

This series is about the patriarchs of the Bible.

Date	Lesson	Key Verse(s)	Passage	Speaker
March 13	The Call of Abram	Genesis 12:1-3	Genesis 12:1-20	Terry Bolden
March 20	God's Covenant with Abram	Genesis 15:5-6	Genesis 15:1-21	Tim Archer
March 27	Isaac's Birth and "Sacrifice"	Genesis 22:11-12	Genesis 21:1-22:19	David Barber
April 3	Jacob and Esau Compete	Genesis 27:36	Genesis 27:1-28:22	Jim Fleming
April 10	Jacob and Esau Reconcile	Genesis 33:4	Genesis 32:1-33:20	Jim Fleming

## Sunday school class timeline

8:50: Breakfast ready

9:07: Announcements (let Jim know prior to a Sunday if you have an announcement)

9:10: Lesson

9:40: Prayer requests at each table

9:45: Dismiss

9:50: Room cleared

# Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: The Call of Abram

---

## Preview: Why me?

During his seventy-five years, Abram had cultivated the habit of listening for God's voice and obeying it. In addition, Abram frequently took time to remember what God had done and to deepen his relationship with him (**Genesis 12:7-8**). Therefore, when God said, "Leave" (**Genesis 12:1**), Abram left even when the destination was unknown. Because Abram spent time seeking God, he was ready for God's call. That is a good example for us to follow, too.

Key thought: God will **use** those who trust and obey Him

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Genesis 12 (Author = Moses)

When you think of Abraham, what do you think of?

### Promises to Abram

#### 1 Now the LORD had said to Abram:

**"Get out of your country,  
From your family  
And from your father's house,  
To a land that I will show you.**

Why **Abram**? Was he more moral? Was he more obedient? Abram is unique in the way he is referred to in Scripture: **James 2:23: the friend of God; 2 Chronicles 20:7: Abraham Your friend forever; Isaiah 41:8: Abraham My friend. Hebrews 11** lays out Abraham's faith—but it did not start out great—it grew. He was not super-human and Scripture shows us many of Abraham's pitfalls. It was a process of grace!

Why the **Jew**? **Deuteronomy 7:6-8** shows that there was no reason listed other than love. There was no action or activity on the part of the Jews, but simply a choice by God.

Why **me**? Why does God choose anyone? There are many things about God and the, 'why,' of it that I do not know nor understand. Do I appreciate it? Yes! Do I understand it? No.

Why **leave**? Why could God not have just blessed Abram where Abram was? **Halley's Bible Handbook (page 95): When God called Abram, he was in a city in Babylonia, named Ur of the Chaldees. Ur was a very advanced city and was believed to have been founded some five hundred years before the time of Abraham. Ur could be compared to a modern city, having libraries, schools, and a system of law. It was a rich city and many valuable treasures have been discovered including elaborate jewelry. The false religion of astrology, which was begun at Babel, was practiced there as it was in all Babylonia. Abraham's father, Terah, according to Joshua 24:2, worshiped idols. Jewish tradition refers to Terah as an idol maker. Ur was an idolatrous city—worshiping many different Gods such as the god of fire, moon, sun, and stars. Sin was the name of the chief idol deity of Ur. Ningal was the wife of the moon-god, Sin, and was worshiped as a mother God in many other cities. Ur was an evil and sinful city as can**

**be seen in the worship practices of the moon-goddess, Ningal.** We are a product of our environment and God can do great things in spite of our environment, but sometimes the environment has to change. **Every female in the city at some time in her life would have to take her turn in serving as a priestess prostitute in the temples.** God calls him away out of this city.

**2 I will make you a great nation;** [Abraham during his life took on other kings and their armies (Genesis 14) and won, but never saw the promise of a nation of descendants fulfilled. As to the Jewish people themselves, history shows God has little mercy on those opposing His, ‘chosen people.’]

**I will bless you**

**And make your name great;** [God did and we are still talking about Abraham’s greatness and faith **4,000** years later. The three major religions of the world, Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, all revere him. Again, with his descendants, the Jews have seen an inordinate amount of success in every area they endeavor to pursue. A big reason in Hitler’s animosity was the Jewish presence and success in business and finance throughout Europe in the early 1900s.]

**And you shall be a blessing.** [Abraham was gracious, merciful, giving, and self-sacrificing. Many in his day were blessed by knowing and interacting with him.]

In **Genesis 11**, we see man’s plan; but in **Genesis 12**, God shares His plan. An overwhelming number of commentators list these blessings as both personal (to Abram himself) and familial (transferring to his descendants).

**3 I will bless those who bless you,**

**And I will curse him who curses you;** [Abraham certainly saw this in his lifetime—see the examples of **Genesis 14** of the four kings (example of curse) and of Melchizedek (blessing). What about the Jewish people? Look at the nations who have historically opposed them. Would you want to put this promise to the test to see if it still works today? Hint: if you do, focus on the blessing.]

**And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”** [This is a clear reference giving the promise of the **Messiah** (see **Genesis 15; 22; 26**, for reiteration of all or part of this covenant.) **Galatians 3:8-9: And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, “In you all the nations shall be blessed.” So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.** Wow! Paul calls this part of the Abrahamic Covenant the, ‘gospel,’ equating it to the, ‘good news,’ of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.]

### Why Abram?

So what made Abram so special that God would call him? Was it his faithfulness? In **Acts 7:2-4**, Stephen states the call of Abram occurred before he lived in Haran (meaning the Ur of the Chaldees). However, **Genesis 12** occurred in Haran. So, where did Abram get called? In Ur. In addition, **Genesis 11:31-32** says that Abram went to Haran after being called and lived there until Terah died. Abram was not immediately obedient. God has to call him again in **Genesis 12**.

**4 So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him [Acts 7:2-4—the second time?], and Lot went with him** [Why did Lot go with him? Abram was supposed to get away from his family, right?]. **And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. 5 Then Abram took Sarai his wife**

and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran [God is already prospering him], and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan. **6** Abram passed through the land [why?] to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites were then in the land [So?! Research Canaanite sacrifices to see the horrific practices these people incorporated into their idolatry].

**7** Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." [Abraham never owned any **land** in his lifetime, except the burial cave he purchased] And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. **8** And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent [He lived in a **tent** his entire life also] with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD. **9** So Abram journeyed, going on still toward the South.

### Abram in Egypt

**10** Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to dwell there, for the famine was severe in the land. [Why? God did not tell him to go to Egypt. This was disobedience—and Abram came back with Hagar (and ultimately Ishmael).] **11** And it came to pass, when he was close to entering Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, "Indeed I know that you are a woman of beautiful countenance [Sarai is **60** years old]. **12** Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, 'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. **13** Please say you are my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you." [Is this an acceptable half-lie?]

**14** So it was, when Abram came into Egypt, that the Egyptians saw the woman, that she was very beautiful. **15** The princes of Pharaoh also saw her and commended her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken to Pharaoh's house. **16** He treated Abram well for her sake. He had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female servants, female donkeys, and camels.

**17** But the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife [sin **always** affects others]. **18** And Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? **19** Why did you say, 'She is my sister'? I might have taken her as my wife. Now therefore, here is your wife; take her and go your way." **20** So Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him; and they sent him away, with his wife and all that he had.

Abram did not start out as a great man of faith—his faith grew—just like ours does.

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. Many of God's promises **to** Abraham were never seen **by** Abraham.
2. God's call was because of **grace**, not because Abraham deserved it.
3. God still calls Abrahams today (every day) to a life of faithfulness.

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Do not live life based on what God has done for me lately.
2. Trust Him at His word, rest in His promises, and obey as if you **love** Him.

# Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: God's Covenant with Abram

---

## Preview: He feels your pain

God's amazing promise to build a nation had become the source of emotional pain for Abram (Abraham before he was Abraham) and Sarai (Sarah before she was Sarah)—“**You have given me no offspring**” (**Genesis 15:3**). It seemed impossible! God knew Abram needed encouragement so he gave him a peek at the master plan (**Genesis 15:12-18**). That master plan culminated in the birth of the Savior: Jesus.

Key thought: Nothing is impossible with God

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Genesis 15 (Author = Moses)

Note: Outline and green commentary taken from **David Guzik's Commentaries on the Bible**

### A. God speaks to Abram's fears and doubts with a promise.

**1 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.”** [God is addressing several things in Abram's life to prepare him for what is coming next.]

#### 1. (vs. 1) The word of the LORD comes to Abram in a vision.

- a. How does the word of the LORD come to us? The Bible, the Holy Spirit, other believers, etc.
- b. Do not be afraid . . . I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward: Abram had just defeated a much larger army . . . he had reason to be afraid for his security
- c. Your shield . . . your . . . reward: Abram needed a shield because he was expecting to be attacked. He needed reward because he had just forfeited great reward offered from the king of Sodom.
  - i. God will more than make up what Abram has given up for the Lord.
  - ii. God knows how to become the answer to our need. Who knows me better than my Maker?
- d. Do not be afraid: God never tells us, “do not be afraid,” without giving us a reason. The Creator is taking time to encourage His creation.

**2 But Abram said, “Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” 3 Then Abram said, “Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!”**

#### 2. (vss. 2-3) Abram honestly expresses his doubts.

- a. Lord GOD, what will You give me: God's promise seemed to ring hollow in Abram's ears. God told Abram that Abram would be a great nation, but that was almost 10 years prior.

- i. It is almost as if Abram [**meant**], "Lord, You've given me lots of stuff, and now promise to give me more, and to protect me. . . . I want the son You promised me!" The bloodline was life to people (at that time in history).
- ii. **Eliezer of Damascus** was Abram's chief assistant, his right-hand man. He was a good man, but not a son to Abram. Had Abram died without a son, Eliezer would have been the recipient of Abram's wealth.

b. **Look, You have given me no offspring:** Abram was **honest** before the Lord.

**4 And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." 5 Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."**

3. (vss. 4-5) God speaks to Abram's doubts with a promise.

- a. **This one shall not be your heir:** God reminds Abram of the promise **originally** recorded in **Genesis 12:2 and 13:15-16**. God does this because He knows how much we *need* to be reminded.
- b. **One who will come from your own body shall be your heir:** God often states a promise with such certainty, we believe it will be fulfilled right away; but the fulfillment of *this* promise was still 15 years away. An example of our impatience is our computer's boot-up time—and similarly, we get impatient with God.
- c. **From your own body:** It wasn't a **spiritual** descendant who would inherit the promise.
- d. **Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them:** [God] *confirms* [the promise] with an illustration. **Revelation 22:16**

**6 And he believed in the LORD, and He [the LORD] accounted it to him [Abram] for righteousness.**

4. (vs. 6) Abram's **response** [of faith] to God's promise.

- a. **And he believed in the LORD:** When Abram put his **trust** in God, specifically in God's promise
  - i. **Two types of righteousness:** [man's] righteousness we *accomplish* by our own efforts, and [God's] righteousness *accounted* to us by the work of God when we believe. God's righteousness is getting ready to take care of man's lack of righteousness.
- b. **And He accounted it to him for righteousness:** This is one of the clearest expressions in the Bible of the truth of **salvation** by **grace**, through **faith**. This is the first time *believe* . . . *righteousness* is used in the Bible. It is the gospel in the Old Testament. **Romans 4:1-3, 9-10, 19-24**

- c. **He accounted it to him for righteousness: Romans 4:9-10 . . . righteousness was accounted to Abram before he was circumcised (Genesis 17). Faith alone . . . caused God to account Abram as righteous.** This debate over circumcision was a debate that was still raging between Peter and Paul in **Acts** (whether or not circumcision was required for salvation).
  - i. [Justification] **is the chief article from which all other doctrines have flowed. [Luther, cited in Boice]**
- d. **He believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness: The faith making Abram righteous wasn't so much believing in God . . . as it was *believing God*. James 2:19**

## B. God speaks to Abram's doubt with a covenant.

**7 Then He said to him, "I *am* the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it."**

**8 And he said, "Lord GOD, how shall I know that I will inherit it?"**

### 1. (vss. 7-8) Abram's doubts surface again.

b./i-ii. How could Abram ask, "**How shall I know that I will inherit it,**" when God had just accounted him righteous? . . . Remember, Abram had no title deed to the land.

**9 So He said to him, "Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." 10 Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. 11 And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.**

### 2. (vss. 9-11) Abram prepares to make a covenant with God.

- b. But Abram knew exactly what to do with these animals: **he . . . cut them in two . . . and placed each piece opposite the other . . .** God was telling Abram to get a contract ready for signing.
  - i. In those days, contracts were made by the sacrificial cutting of animals. . . . Both parties . . . would walk through the animal parts together, repeating the terms of the covenant.
  - iii. Symbolism . . . first, this is a covenant so serious it is sealed with blood [just as Jesus Christ sealed His covenant with us with His blood]; second, if I break this covenant, let this same bloodshed be poured out on my animals and me!
- c. As Abram waits for the Lord to appear and walk through the carcasses with him (to sign the covenant), God doesn't come right away, but the vultures do.
  - i. Abram fully expects God to come down and walk through the animal parts with him, because God had previously appeared to him (**Genesis 12:7**).



**12** Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror *and* great darkness fell upon him. **13** Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land *that is* not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. **14** And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. **15** Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. **16** But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites *is* not yet complete."

3. (vss. 12-16) Prologue to the covenant.

- a. At the end of the day, God has still not **appeared** to walk through the animal parts with Abram. Instead, God causes a **deep sleep** to fall upon Abram.
- b. **Know certainly**: Abram wanted concrete proof from God.
  - i. God told him some of the hardship that would befall his descendants.
- c. God tells Abram of the slavery . . . in Egypt (**Exodus 1:1-14**), yet they would . . . come back to the Promised Land.

**17** And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. **18** On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying:

"To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates— **19** the Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites, **20** the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, **21** the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."

4. (vss. 17-21) The covenant is made.

- a. Abram . . . sees God . . . pass through the animal parts all by **Himself**, while Abram watches.
- b. God represents Himself by two emblems: a smoking oven and a burning torch.
  - i. The **smoking oven** reminds us of the pillar of cloud representing the presence of God (**Exodus 13:21-22**), the smoke on Mount Sinai (**Exodus 19:18**), and the cloud of God's Shekinah glory (**1 Kings 8:10-12**).
  - ii. The **burning torch** reminds us of the pillar of fire representing the presence of God (**Exodus 13:21-22**), of the burning bush before Moses (**Exodus 3:4**), and fire from heaven which sometimes consumed sacrifices God was well pleased with (**1 Kings 18:38**; **1 Chronicles 21:26**; **2 Chronicles 7:1**).
- c. The **smoking oven and the burning torch** . . . showed this was a **unilateral** covenant. God is putting all of the responsibility for keeping this covenant on Himself. This is a one-sided covenant.

- d. By entering into this contract, there is a sense in which God was saying, "If I don't keep My word, let *Me* be put asunder." God was putting His **Deity** on the line.
- e. By quoting the specific lands Abram's descendants will inherit, God makes it plain this is not a, "pie in the sky," spiritual promise. It is real, and through it, Israel will inherit real land.

**Apply (What is the point?)**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Personalize (What do I do with that?)**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

# Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: Isaac's Birth and "Sacrifice"

---

## Preview: Strange but true

God tells Abraham to sacrifice his only son Isaac ([Genesis 22:2](#)) and Abraham wastes no time obeying. As the tension mounts in front of the altar, Abraham unwittingly prophesies God's plan of salvation when he says, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering." ([Genesis 22:8](#)). God did provide the lamb for Abraham. He also provided the Lamb, his only son Jesus Christ as the once and for all sacrifice for our sins.

Key thought: Abraham's "sacrifice" foreshadows God's sacrifice of Jesus

## Outline

These two chapters are the crossroads of religion, theology, and faith in the Old Testament. Essentially, the birth and destiny of the nation of Israel is outlined here and these chapters lay out the form and format for God's entire redemptive plan for the human race. This whole story is about the nation of Israel.

1. Amazing birth of Isaac ([Genesis 21:1-7](#))
  - a. God speaks to Abraham and Sarah – Birth of Isaac ([Genesis 21:1-4](#))
  - b. Abraham and Sarah's advanced age ([Genesis 21:5-7](#))
2. Hagar and Ishmael Depart (Genesis 21:8-21)
  - a. Isaac comes of age and is weaned ([Genesis 21:8](#))
  - b. Abraham listens to Sarah ([Genesis 21:9-12](#))
  - c. Promise that Ishmael will have a nation ([Genesis 21:13](#))
  - d. God provides and confirms promise to Ishmael ([Genesis 21:14-21](#))
3. God calls Abraham to sacrifice Isaac (Genesis 22:1-19)
  - a. God commands Abraham to offer up Isaac ([Genesis 22:1-2](#))
  - b. Abraham's faith and obedience to the Divine command ([Genesis 22:3-10](#))
  - c. Another sacrifice is provided instead of Isaac ([Genesis 22: 11-14](#))
  - d. The covenant with Abraham renewed ([Genesis 22: 15-19](#))

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Genesis 21:1-21; 22:1-19 (Author = Moses)

1. Amazing birth of Isaac ([Genesis 21:1-7](#))
  - a. God speaks to Abraham and Sarah – Birth of Isaac ([Genesis 21:1-4](#))

## Isaac Is Born

**1 And the LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken. 2 For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him** [God foretold the pregnancy]. **3 And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him—whom Sarah bore to him—Isaac** [laughing one]. [This was not Abraham's only son. His first son was

Ishmael through Hagar through lack of faith expressed by Abraham.] **4 Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him** [a fulfillment of [Genesis 17:9-14](#)].

- b. Abraham and Sarah's advanced age([Genesis 21:5-7](#))

**5 Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. 6 And Sarah** [Sarah was at least 90] **said, "God has made me laugh, and all who hear will laugh with me." 7 She also said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? For I have borne him a son in his old age."**

- 2. Hagar and Ishmael Depart ([Genesis 21:8-21](#))

- a. Isaac comes of age and is weaned ([Genesis 21:8](#))

### **Hagar and Ishmael Depart**

**8 So the child grew and was weaned** [two-three years old]. **And Abraham made a great feast on the same day that Isaac was weaned** [typically because they had passed a major mortality milestone].

- b. Abraham listens to Sarah ([Genesis 21:9-12](#))

**9 And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing** [Ishmael was scoffing Isaac – God used this to prompt the casting out of Hagar]. **10 Therefore she said to Abraham, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, namely with Isaac."** [Sarah saw Ishmael for what he represented – lack of faith by Abraham] **11 And the matter was very displeasing in Abraham's sight because of his son.** [Abraham and Sarah are having a fight]

**12 But God said to Abraham, "Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice** [My lesson in life – God built woman with more antennas than men]; **for in Isaac your seed shall be called.** [God spoke to Abraham and confirmed that Ishmael was to be cast out. It is interesting that God told him to listen to Sarah. God works through our expressions of lack of faith. God uses us despite us.]

- c. Promise that Ishmael will have a nation ([Genesis 21:13](#))

**13 Yet I will also make a nation of the son** [Ishmael] **of the bondwoman** [Hagar], **because he is your seed."** [God still promises a different nation through Ishmael. God says He will build the nation specifically because he is the seed of Abraham. This becomes the Arab nation.]

- d. God provides and confirms promise to Ishmael ([Genesis 21:14-21](#))

**14 So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water; and putting it on her shoulder, he gave it and the boy to Hagar, and sent her away. Then she departed and wandered in the Wilderness of Beersheba. 15 And the water in the skin was used up, and she placed the boy under one of the shrubs.** [How awful would this be?] **16 Then she went and sat down across from him at a distance of about a bowshot; for she said to herself, "Let me not see the death of the boy." So she sat opposite him, and lifted her voice and wept.**

**17 And God heard the voice of the lad** [Not Hagar, but Ishmael]. **Then the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said to her, "What ails you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. 18 Arise, lift up the lad and hold him with your hand, for I will make him a great nation."**

**19 Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water** [the angel of God provided the water]. **And she went and filled the skin with water, and gave the lad a drink. 20 So God was with the lad; and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. 21 He dwelt in the Wilderness of Paran; and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt** [Ishmael is approximately 16-17 years old. New Testament references: **Galatians 4:29-30**: Ishmael is described as, **"born according to the flesh."** **Romans 9:7-10**: **"children of the flesh."** Fortunately for us, God makes things happen out of our mistakes.]

3. God calls Abraham to sacrifice Isaac (**Genesis 22:1-19**)
  - a. God commands Abraham to offer up Isaac (**Genesis 22:1-2**)

## Genesis 22

### Abraham's Faith Confirmed

**1 Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham** [learn to expect tests], **and said to him, "Abraham!"**

**And he said, "Here I am."** [Abraham demonstrates his availability to God]

**2 Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac** [reinforcing the legitimacy of Isaac's claim to be the rightful heir of Abraham's bloodline], **whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."** [The command to sacrifice Isaac was contradictory to God's promise of a nation (**Genesis 12:1-3**). Child sacrifice was not a practice of the Jews but it was known in Canaan. However, remember that our testing is our opportunity to show God our faith.]

Taken from Sam Shamoun on [answering-islam.org](http://answering-islam.org):

Muslims . . . feel that Ishmael was the one offered up by Abraham. . . . Since this idea stems from the Muslim misunderstanding of the phrase "only son," it becomes necessary to explain what this phrase exactly means in relation to Isaac. A careful reading of the Holy Bible shows that the phrase is used to affirm Isaac's unique status, a status based on the following:

- **Isaac the Promised Child:** Isaac was the only promised child of Abraham, a fact which the Quran agrees with (cf. **Genesis 17:15-21**; Surah 11:69-73, 37:112-113, 51:24-30). Ishmael was never a promised child.
- **Miraculous Birth of Isaac:** Isaac was conceived miraculously to a barren mother and a very aged father, with the Quran likewise agreeing (cf. **Genesis 17:15-17**; **18:9-15**; **21:1-7**; **Galatians 4:28-29**; Surah 11:69-73, 51:24-30). Ishmael was conceived normally without the need of any miraculous intervention.

- **Isaac's Descendants:** God promised that it would be Isaac's descendants who would inherit the land given to Abraham (Genesis 13:14-18; 15:18-21; 28:13-14). Ishmael had no part in the inheritance and promise given to Isaac through Abraham.

b. Abraham's faith and obedience to the Divine command (Genesis 22:3-10)

**3 So Abraham rose early in the morning** [Abraham got after obedience immediately] **and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.** [Abraham was immediately and unquestionably obedient. The journey to the Land of Moriah was a three-day trip.] **4 Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. 5 And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you."** [Abraham left the servants behind. Interestingly, he says, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship." Worship was the point.]

**6 So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac** [meaning Isaac was carrying the wood] **his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. 7 But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!"**

**And he said, "Here I am, my son."**

**Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"**

**8 And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide** [because just as Abraham was insufficient to provide his own sacrifice, there is nothing we can do to provide for ourselves] **for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering** [foreshadow of the provision of Christ as the offering for sin]. **" So the two of them went together.**

**9 Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son** [this would have been extremely hard] **and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. 10 And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.** [Abraham was fully committed to doing God's will—he had Isaac all the way to the altar.]

c. Another sacrifice is provided instead of Isaac (Genesis 22: 11-14)

**11 But** [thank God!] **the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!"** [God's miraculous intervention shows God never intended for Abraham to go through with it]

**So he said, "Here I am."** [Abraham said, "Here I am"—a true worshiper holds nothing back. Abraham was all in]

**12 And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son** [Abraham's intention to sacrifice Isaac was the same in God's eyes as Abraham actually sacrificing Isaac—this proved to God that Abraham was going to do

**it], your only son** [again, the reinforcement of the legitimacy of Isaac's claim to Abraham's bloodline and inheritance], **from Me."**

**13 Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son** [God provided a ram—worship involves accepting God's sacrificial substitute]. **14 And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided."** [The point of this section is not atonement but rather the demonstration of an obedient servant worshiping God in faith at great cost.]

d. The covenant with Abraham renewed (**Genesis 22: 15-19**)

**15 Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, 16 and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son— 17 blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies** [this last clause is a new element to the Abrahamic Covenant]. **18 In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed** [through Jesus], **because you have obeyed My voice."** [This promise is a result of ONE act of obedience.] **19 So Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.** [God essentially gave back Abraham's son Isaac. God confirms his covenant with Abraham—to provide a nation like stars (**Genesis 15:5; 26:4**) and as numerous as the sand (**Genesis 32:12**).]

### Apply (What is the point?) (Bible Knowledge Commentary)

1. Faith obeys completely the Word of God.
2. Faith surrenders the best to God, holding nothing back.
3. Faith waits on the Lord to provide all one's needs. But God does not provide until personal sacrifice has been made.
4. True worship is costly. This was always so for Israel when they brought sacrifices.

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Know that this was a test (**Genesis 22:1-2**)
  - Live in the fact that God knows the plan and you don't—that is acting in faith
  - Questioning the reality of the test is not helpful. Responding obediently to the test is helpful.
  - Testing is an opportunity to show your faith
  - Learn to expect them (do good/get good, do bad/get bad is a false theology)
  - Faith stretching is a permanent condition—Abraham 100 when the sacrifice took place
  - Trials show whether you have faith or religion
2. Know that one act of faith can change the course of human history (**Hebrews 11:8-12, 17-19**)
  - All nations were blessed
  - Abraham inspired the nation of Israel even to this day—and his faith is always discussed in the context of his actions

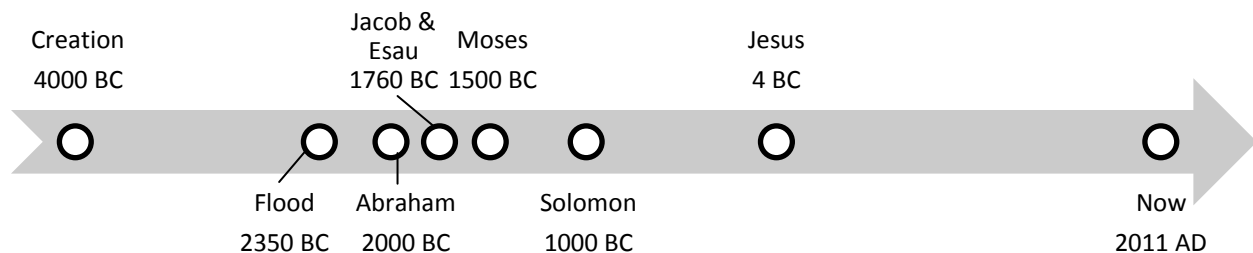
- Whether you look at Moses by the Red Sea, David in the cave, Peter by the fire, or Jesus at Calvary, the lesson is the same: We live by promises, not by explanations
3. Know that my faith must have action or it does not exist ([James 2:14-24](#))
- Faith with works = faith that has substance (this is faith that gets up out of the chair)
  - Faith without works = dead
  - Works without faith = empty



## Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: Jacob and Esau Compete

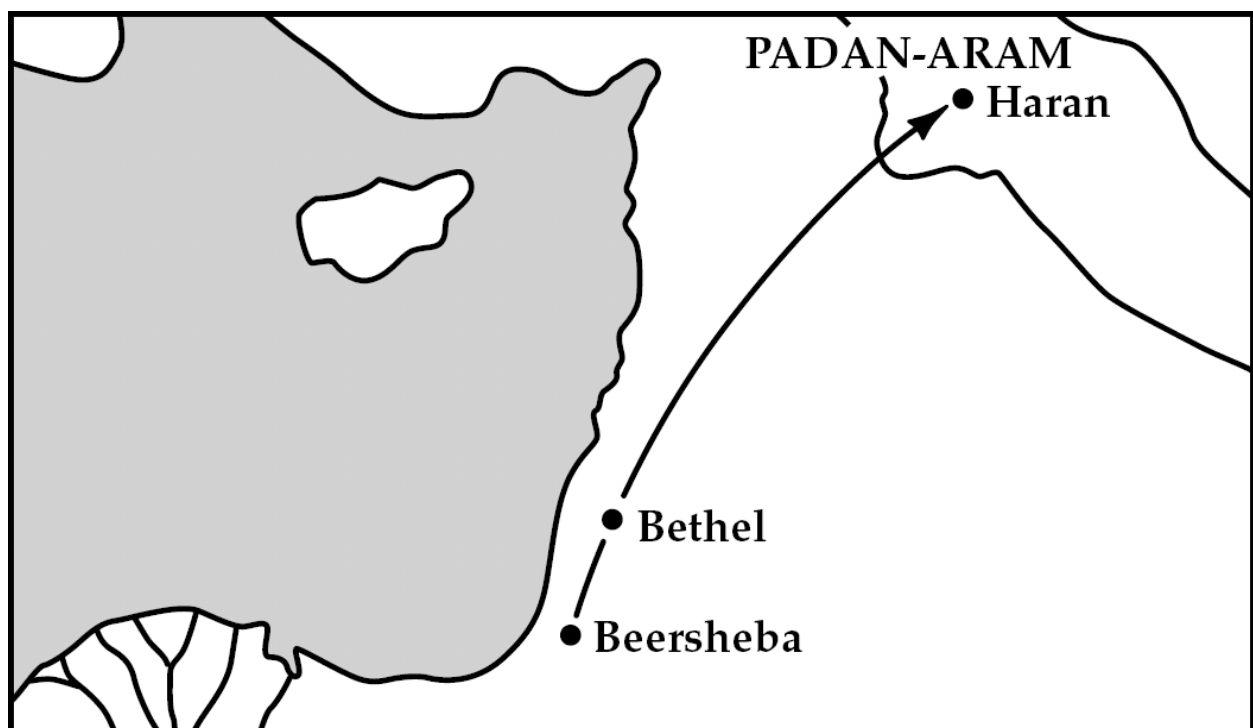
### Review

So far, in this series, we have had lessons about the call of Abram, God's covenant with Abram, and Abraham's 'sacrifice' of Isaac. Thanks to Tim Archer, Terry Bolden, and David Barber for teaching the past three weeks. Assuming a literal interpretation of Bible dates, the following timeline is close:



### Preview: Analyze this!

Today's lesson takes place over 100 years after the 'sacrifice' of Isaac. Here is a map of the area:



**Genesis 27** and part of **Genesis 28** takes place in Beersheba, and the latter part of **Genesis 28** takes place on the route to Haran (present-day Turkey).

**LD Commentary: A manipulating mom, a dying father, the youngest son lies but still gets the better end of the deal, and the oldest son gets manipulated out of his blessing, then marries a girl just to get back at his dad . . . which really doesn't work, because his dad was just reacting to something Rebekah**

had said, which was actually a lie, just to get her own way and protect Jacob . . . this family is exhausting! It sounds like reality TV. Of course, no family is perfect. God uses broken people from broken families to accomplish His perfect purposes. He has no other choice—it is all He has to work with. He can even use our brokenness to draw us closer to Himself.

Key thoughts: (1) Bible characters were imperfect and (2) we often encounter God in the broken places of our lives

### Back-story (Genesis 25:19-28; 26:34-35)

God told Rebekah that Jacob would be the stronger and would rule over his twin brother Esau (**Genesis 25:23b: One people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger**). Isaac (the dad) loves **Esau** (the oldest twin) the most and Rebekah (the mom) loves **Jacob** (the youngest twin) the most. Esau's name means hairy and Jacob's name means supplanter/deceiver. Later in **Genesis 25**, Jacob gets Esau to sell him his birthright (his right to the extra portion of his father's inheritance—the older son's birthright was twice as much property/possessions as the other sons—meaning Esau should have gotten 2/3 and Jacob 1/3—but God had other plans and He had made this clear to Rebekah).

**Genesis 26: 34-35: When Esau was forty years old, he took as wives Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite. 35 And they were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah.** Summary of **Genesis 26:34-35**: Jacob is single and Esau is a polygamist who married women from the wrong place. There are numerous problems in this family.

### Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Genesis 27-28 (Author = Moses)

#### Isaac Blesses Jacob

**1 Now it came to pass, when Isaac** [he laughs] **was old and his eyes were so dim that he could not see** [many times in the Bible, a physical ailment also communicates a **moral** issue as well—in this case, no one in this family could 'see' very well], **that he called Esau his older son and said to him, "My son." And he** [Esau] **answered him** [Isaac], **"Here I am."**

**2 Then he** [Isaac] **said, "Behold now, I am old. I do not know the day of my death** [Isaac is either 117 or 137 years old. Jacob and Esau are either 57 or 77 years old. **David Guzik: Isaac believes his time has come to die, and this is his way of "settling his affairs," sort of a last will and testament.**]. **3 Now therefore, please take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me. 4 And make me savory food** [delicacies that could be tasted or relished], **such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die."** [This is a clear statement of intent to bless Esau instead of Jacob despite God's clear directions to Rebekah 50+ years before.]

The blessing was the father's way of saying who is in charge of the family once the father dies. Isaac was formally announcing who would lead the family and which one of his sons would receive the Abrahamic covenant. God accomplishes the blessing, but the human father directs it. The blessing is a big deal.

**5 Now Rebekah** [ensnarer] **was listening** [eavesdropping] **when Isaac spoke to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt game and to bring it** [Esau was obedient]. **6 So Rebekah spoke to Jacob her**

son, saying, “Indeed I heard your father speak to Esau your brother, saying, **7 ‘Bring me game and make savory food for me, that I may eat it and bless you in the presence of the LORD before my death.’** **8 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to what I command you.** **9 Go now to the flock and bring me from there two choice kids of the goats, and I will make savory food from them for your father, such as he loves** [pleasing your spouse is good, but we must be very cautious that pleasing does not turn into **deceiving**]. **10 Then you shall take it to your father, that he may eat it, and that he may bless you before his death.”** [This is blatant deception. Remember that children learn what we do, not just what we say. However, sometimes, what we do and what we say is wrong.]

Question: Was it right or wrong of Jacob to obey his mother Rebekah in her attempt to deceive Isaac?

Answer: It was wrong. It is never right to deceive your spouse. Even if she thought she was helping God accomplish what He wanted, it is never right to do wrong to get a chance to do right.

**11 And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, “Look, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth-skinned** [smooth/slippery—the root word means deceitful because of the slipperiness of speech] **man.** **12 Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be a deceiver to him; and I shall bring a curse on myself and not a blessing.”** [Jacob’s concern is the punishment, not being righteous]

**13 But his mother said to him, “Let your curse be on me, my son** [an incredibly foolish statement—up there with, ‘yes, I will cosign that loan for you’]; **only obey my voice, and go, get them** [the goats] **for me.”** **14 And he went and got them and brought them to his mother, and his mother made savory food** [note that something that should not have died had to die because of this deception (deception is bloody and causes early death)], **such as his father loved.** **15 Then Rebekah took the choice clothes of her elder son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son.** **16 And she put the skins of the kids of the goats on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck** [Eastern goats have long, fine hair, not coarse and rough hair; **Coffman: sometimes used as a substitute for human hair**]. **17 Then she gave the savory food and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.** [This is willful premeditation to deceive.]

**18 So he went to his father and said, “My father.” And he said, “Here I am. Who are you, my son?”** **19 Jacob said to his father, “I am Esau your firstborn** [lie]; **I have done just as you told me** [lie]; **please arise, sit and eat of my game** [lie], **that your soul may bless me.”** **20 But Isaac said to his son, “How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?”** [Isaac smells a trap] **And he said, “Because the LORD your God** [not, ‘my God’] **brought it to me.”** [lie]

**21 Isaac said to Jacob, “Please come near, that I may feel you, my son, whether you are really my son Esau or not.”** **22 So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, and he** [Isaac] **felt him** [Jacob] **and said, “The voice is Jacob’s voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.”** [Isaac is in such poor health that he did not notice that the food was domestic and the hair was fake] **23 And he** [Isaac] **did not recognize him** [Jacob], **because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau’s hands; so he** [Isaac] **blessed him** [Jacob]. [Question: Was the outcome what God wanted? **Yes**. Did the means justify the ends? **No**. The deception is complete, and now we get to see all of the impacts of this deception.]

**24 Then he said, “Are you really my son Esau?”** [Even afterward Isaac is skeptical] **He said, “I am.”** [lie]

**25** He said, “Bring *it* near to me, and I will eat of my son’s game, so that my soul may bless you.” So he brought *it* near to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank [normal drinking, not ‘drunk’ drinking]. **26** Then his father Isaac said to him, “Come near now and kiss me, my son.” **27** And he came near and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his clothing, and blessed him [second blessing] and said:

“Surely, the smell of my son  
Is like the smell of a field  
Which the LORD has blessed.

**28** Therefore may God give you  
Of the dew of heaven,  
Of the fatness of the earth,  
And plenty of grain and wine.

**29** Let peoples serve you,  
And nations bow down to you.  
Be master over your brethren, [These two lines are the key]  
And let your mother’s sons bow down to you. [they pose a major problem for Esau]  
Cursed *be* everyone who curses you,  
And blessed *be* those who bless you!”

### Esau’s Lost Hope

**30** Now it happened, as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting [have you ever been just seconds late to an important meeting and missed out on something special?]. **31** He also had made savory food, and brought it to his father, and said to his father, “Let my father arise and eat of his son’s game, that your soul may bless me.” [Esau was obedient]

**32** And his father Isaac said to him, “Who *are* you?” So he said, “I *am* your son, your firstborn, Esau.”

**33** Then Isaac trembled exceedingly [Isaac was terrified], and said, “Who? Where *is* the one who hunted game and brought *it* to me? I ate all *of it* before you came, and I have blessed him—and indeed he shall be blessed.” **34** When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with an exceedingly great and bitter cry [because Esau knew this impacted himself and his family forever], and said to his father, “Bless me—me also, O my father!”

**35** But he said, “Your brother came with deceit [deceit, treachery] and has taken away your blessing.” [This is sad and irreversible. Some mistakes cannot be **undone**: murder, rape] **36** And Esau said, “Is he not rightly named Jacob [supplanter/deceiver]? For he has supplanted [circumvent, take by the heel, follow at the heel, assail insidiously, overreach] me these two times. He took away my birthright [lie—Esau sold his birthright; **Lori Drake: Isn’t it amazing how we remember things the way we want to remember them?**], and now look, he has taken away my blessing!” And he said, “Have you not reserved a blessing for me?”

**37 Then Isaac answered and said to Esau, “Indeed I have made him your master, and all his brethren I have given to him as servants; with grain and wine I have sustained him. What shall I do now for you, my son?” 38 And Esau said to his father, “Have you only one blessing, my father? Bless me—me also, O my father!” And Esau lifted up his voice and wept. 39 Then Isaac his father answered and said to him:**

**“Behold, your dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth,**

**And of the dew of heaven from above.** [Isaac told Jacob that God would give Jacob these things, not that he would live off of or from these things]

**40 By your sword you shall live,**

**And you shall serve your brother;**

**And it shall come to pass, when you become restless** [restless from roaming around],

**That you shall break** [tear away, snatch] **his yoke from your neck** [the back of the neck].” [Hope?]

### Jacob Escapes from Esau

**41 So Esau hated** [hate, bear a grudge, cherish animosity against—sin has awful consequences] **Jacob** [Esau hates Jacob, not Isaac or Rebekah] **because of the blessing with which his father blessed him, and Esau said in his heart, “The days of mourning for my father** [dad’s death] **are at hand; then I will kill my brother Jacob.”** [Rebekah’s deceit turned into Jacob’s lie, which turned into Esau’s hate, which turned into Esau’s murderous plan. We never know the consequences of our deception.]

**42 And the words of Esau her older son were told** [reported] **to Rebekah** [How? He said them in his heart. What is in your heart has a way of coming out your mouth ([Matthew 12:34b](#))]. **So she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said to him, “Surely your brother Esau comforts** [is feeling sorry for] **himself concerning you by intending to kill you. 43 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice: arise, flee to my brother Laban in Haran** [northeast of where they were in Beersheba—approximately 500 miles].

**44 And stay with him a few days** [this ‘few days’ turned out to be over **20** years], **until your brother’s fury turns away, 45 until your brother’s anger turns away from you, and he forgets** [forgets, ceases to care] **what you have done to him** [what? Esau is not going to forget this—how could you forget this?]; **then I will send and bring you from there. Why should I be bereaved also of you both in one day?”** [Jamieson, Fausset, Brown Commentary: The nearest of kin would be obliged to avenge the death of Jacob upon his brother.]

**46 And Rebekah said to Isaac, “I am weary** [sick-feeling] **of my life because of the daughters of Heth** [the wives of Esau—Heth was the father of the Hittites]; **if Jacob takes a wife of the daughters of Heth, like these who are the daughters of the land, what good will my life be to me?”** [Rebekah has a fake pity-party to manipulate her husband Isaac once again. This is the last time Rebekah is mentioned in Scripture except for her death—what a way to be remembered! **John Wesley: If we use guile once, we shall be very ready to use it again.**]

### Genesis 28

**1 Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him** [third time], **and charged him, and said to him: “You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan** [the land west of the Jordan]. **2 Arise, go to Padan Aram**

[northern Mesopotamia in Aram, a region of Syria], **to the house of Bethuel your mother's father; and take yourself a wife from there of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother** [your first cousins].

**3 "May God Almighty bless you,  
And make you fruitful and multiply you,  
That you may be an assembly of peoples;**

**4 And give you the blessing of Abraham,  
To you and your descendants with you,  
That you may inherit the land  
In which you are a stranger,**

**Which God gave to Abraham."** [Most commentators feel that this, 'third blessing' was to give Jacob confidence in Isaac's first two blessings, but this blessing clearly links Jacob to the **Abramic** Covenant]

**5 So Isaac sent Jacob away** [and we have no clear record that Jacob ever sees his parents again—and Isaac lives to be **180** (he lives the last 43 or 63 years of his life without seeing his son)], **and he went to Padan Aram, to Laban the son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.**

### **Esau Marries Mahalath**

**6 Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Padan Aram to take himself a wife from there, and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan,"** **7 and that Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother and had gone to Padan Aram.** **8 Also Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan did not please his father Isaac.** **9 So Esau went to Ishmael** [remember him from last week? Ishmael would have been someone Esau could relate to—a firstborn that did not get treated as a firstborn (misery loves company)] **and took Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife in addition to the wives he had** [Esau married his first cousin too, but this was not the, 'one per customer,' plan that God designed].

### **Jacob's Vow at Bethel**

**10 Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran.** **11 So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep.** **12 Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.** [In case you are looking for Jesus in this story, Jesus is the **ladder**—see **John 1:51**]

**13 And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: "I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants.** **14 Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.** [This is similar to the Abramic covenant. God confirms the covenant with Jacob and the ladder is in between the two parties while the confirmation occurs—the things being sacrificed were always in between those making the covenant] **15 Behold, I am with you and will keep** [guard, keep watch, protect] **you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I**

**have spoken to you.”** [Six, “I” statements—an incredible promise from God. Question: What does Jacob have to do to get this promise? Answer: Nothing (God is going to do everything). God repeats the covenant (Isaac had already given it to Jacob once)—making sure Jacob understands it.]

**16 Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it** [not: God was here and I missed it, but rather: God was already here before I got here and I didn’t know about this place].” **17 And he was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house** [dwelling, not a physical house] **of God, and this is the gate** [entrance] **of heaven!”** [What is Jacob focused on? The **place**. What should have Jacob been focused on? The **Person**. Jacob’s location-based theology of God is similar to many alive today—many think that God only lives in holy places.]

**18 Then Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil** [a common practice to show something is set apart for a particular function—he is anointing this rock with oil] **on top of it. 19 And he called the name of that place Bethel** [house of God]; **but the name of that city had been Luz** [almond tree—the almond also shows up in the design of the bowls in the Tabernacle] **previously** [48 miles from Beersheba]. **20 Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, 21 so that I come back to my father’s house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God.** [Jacob believes in a *quid pro quo* god.] **22 And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God’s house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth** [a tithe—Abraham had tithed before this in **Genesis 14:20**, showing that tithing predated the Law] **to You.”** [Eight “me/I” statements. Jacob feels it necessary to add terms to the covenant—man always wants to alter the simplicity of God’s plans.]

**David Guzik: God is gracious enough to not call off the whole deal when He sees such a carnal response from Jacob. Instead, He is willing to be called, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob (Exodus 3:6). . . . Jacob is by no means worthy of this blessing. . . . The amazing thing is that God could bring any good out of all this, and this is an example of a triumph of God’s sovereignty!**

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. Deceit is harmful and has long-lasting repercussions (we are not finished with the repercussions)
2. The ends do not justify the means (it is never right to do wrong in order to get a chance to do right)
3. God’s plan will not be derailed by man (despite our best efforts to mess it up)

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Always tell the truth
2. Don’t be a \_\_\_\_\_ (every human character in this passage was one at some point or another)



# Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: Jacob and Esau Reconcile

---

## Review

To review last week's passage, Isaac and Rebekah played favorites with their twin sons, Jacob and Esau. This caused many issues, but eventually Isaac blessed the younger brother Jacob (as God had told Rebekah to do). Esau then vowed to kill Jacob and Jacob ran away. We left off last week in [Genesis 28](#) with God having just extended the Abrahamic Covenant to Jacob. In [Genesis 29-31](#) (the text that we skip over to get to today's passage), Jacob marries (twice), has kids with four different women, lives with his father-in-law/uncle Laban for about 20 years, and gets filthy rich (Isaac's blessing came true). [Genesis 32](#) picks up with Jacob and his fortune and family leaving Laban. The text now shifts back to Jacob and Esau.

## Preview: True reconciliation

Today's lesson is all about reconciliation—reconciliation with God and reconciliation with man. We see both in Jacob's story. Reconciliation is bringing a relationship (what life is all about) back into harmony. While we read today's passage, you may be reminded of difficult relationships and situations in your life.

Key thought: True reconciliation requires **change**

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Genesis 32-33 (Author = Moses)

### Esau Comes to Meet Jacob

**1 So Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him** [we are not told why these angels met Jacob]. **2 When Jacob saw them, he said, "This is God's camp." And he called the name of that place Mahanaim** [mock-ha-NIE-em; two camps—Jacob's camp and God's camp].

**3 Then Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir** [say-EAR; hairy], **the country of Edom** [in last week's lesson, Isaac 'blessed' Esau by telling him that he would live **by your sword** ([Genesis 27:40](#))? [Deuteronomy 2:22](#) tells us Esau's family went to Seir and drove out the inhabitants by the sword and possessed their land—so Isaac's 'blessing' came true for Esau as well]. **4 And he commanded them, saying, "Speak thus to my lord Esau, 'Thus your servant Jacob says: "I have dwelt with Laban and stayed there until now. 5 I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, and male and female servants; and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favor [favor, grace, charm] in your sight."'"** [Jacob does several things in this communication—he tells Esau he comes in **peace**, in a roundabout way he tells Esau he's not coming for his stuff, and Jacob tells Esau that Jacob is Esau's servant]

**6 Then the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau, and he also is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him." 7 So Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed** [distressed so that you are cramped narrowly—which makes sense since the last thing Jacob heard about Esau was that Esau wanted to kill Jacob; there was nothing that the messengers (who directly interacted with Esau) communicated to Jacob that made Jacob feel at ease; [Shakespeare \(in Hamlet\): Thus conscious does make cowards of us all](#); Jacob was initially crippled by his past—God has promised us much in Christ and we are not called to be cowards for Christ, but more than conquerors for Christ]; **and he [Jacob] divided the people that were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels,**



into two companies [groups]. **8 And he said, "If Esau comes to the one company and attacks it, then the other company which is left will escape."** [Jacob's kneejerk reaction is to use Jacob's wisdom]

**9 Then Jacob said, "O God** [His **second** instinct is to go to God. He gets the order reversed, but at least he does go to God (we do the same far too often)] **of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, the LORD who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your family, and I will deal well with you': 10 I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies** [goodness, kindness, faithfulness] **and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant; for I crossed over this Jordan with my staff** [alone], **and now I have become two companies. 11 Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he come and attack me and the mother with the children. 12 For You said, 'I will surely treat you well, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.'"** [This prayer seems to have a different tone than the last prayer that Jacob prayed to God—this one is humble and less demanding]

Jacob has just prayed a great prayer, but what happens next is important. **David Guzik: George Mueller, a great man of faith and prayer, was once asked what was the most important part of prayer. He replied: "The 15 minutes after I have said Amen."** Do we continue as if we have not talked with God?

**13 So he lodged there that same night, and took what came to his hand as a present for Esau his brother: 14 two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, 15 thirty milk** [nursing] **camels with their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten foals** [580 animals—several hundred thousand of dollars in today's economy; Jacob is filthy rich—we get a feel for how rich he is by the quality/volume of his **gifts**—same for God]. **16 Then he delivered them to the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, "Pass over before me, and put some distance between successive droves** [herds]. **17 And he commanded the first one, saying, "When Esau my brother meets you and asks you, saying, 'To whom do you belong, and where are you going? Whose are these in front of you?' 18 then you shall say, 'They are your servant Jacob's. It is a present sent to my lord Esau; and behold, he also is behind us.'" 19 So he commanded the second, the third, and all who followed the droves, saying, "In this manner you shall speak to Esau when you find him; 20 and also say, 'Behold, your servant Jacob is behind us.'" For he said, "I will appease him with the present that goes before me, and afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me." 21 So the present went on over before him, but he himself lodged that night in the camp.**

### Wrestling with God (note the incorrect title heading)

**22 And he arose that night and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven sons, and crossed over the ford of Jabbok. 23 He took them, sent them over the brook, and sent over what he had. 24 Then Jacob was left alone** [Jacob was undoubtedly nervous about the next day]; **and a Man** [capital M in the NKJV] **wrestled with him** [note that Jacob did not initiate the wrestling with the Man] **until the breaking of day** [Now, on the surface, this seems weird. However, Jacob is about to go into a potentially dangerous situation and he is still depending on his own wisdom, cunning, and planning. This is not where God wants Jacob, so God intervenes. This Man is widely thought to be a pre-incarnate appearance of **Jesus**. It is important to realize that God does not leave His children alone and that God will wrestle with you where your faith is not in harmony with His wise and holy will.]. **25 Now when He**

[Jesus] **saw that He** [Jesus] **did not prevail against him** [Jacob; God sees that God is not winning (really good wrestlers have incredibly good defense—and Jacob was a master at manipulating circumstances to go his way—he was a master wrestler)], **He touched** [word with a wide range of meaning—anything from touch to strike] **the socket of his hip** [God touched Jacob's hip—and the hips are critical in wrestling]; **and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint** [dislocated, torn, alienated] **as He wrestled with him** [this would have been incredibly painful]. **26 And He** [Jesus] **said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks."** [Jacob would not let God go—fortunately for us, it is not up to us to hold on to God—He has a much better grip on us than we do on Him]

**But he** [Jacob] **said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!"**

**David Guzik: Jacob has been reduced to the place where all he can do is hold on to the Lord with everything he has. . . . God is answering Jacob's prayer in Genesis 32:9-12. . . . before Jacob could be delivered from the hand of his brother, he had to be delivered from his own self-will and self-reliance.**

**27 So He said to him, "What is your name?"** [Sounds like Jesus doesn't it? Asking a question when He's asked a question]

**He said, "Jacob** [deceiver—Jacob had to acknowledge who Jacob was before God could use him—and we, like Jacob, must confess the reality of who we are before God]."

**28 And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel** [God prevails (and if God wins, who loses? Jacob loses. Jacob would forever be reminded by his name that God won and Jacob lost.) Again, it sounds like Jesus, though—changing someone's name]; **for you have struggled** [contended, have power] **with God and with men, and have prevailed."** [His hip is out of joint and he wins? **David Guzik: When you battle with God, you only win by losing.** This is eerily similar to Jesus' logic in **Matthew 16:25**—the logic used in the kingdom of God is often backward from what we would expect]

**29 Then Jacob asked, saying, "Tell me Your name, I pray." And He said, "Why is it that you ask about My name?"** [Again, another question—so like Jesus (Jesus rarely answered questions that the person asking the question already knew the answer to)] **And He** [Jesus] **blessed him there.**

**30 So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel** [facing God—Jacob knew who he had met there]: **"For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."** **31 Just as he crossed over Peniel** [same as Peniel, just spelled differently] **the sun rose on him, and he limped on his hip.** [When you meet God you are **never** the same ever again—He will change you—salvation implies and demands a change—you cannot meet the Creator of the Universe and remain the same] **32 Therefore to this day the children of Israel do not eat the muscle that shrank, which is on the hip socket, because He touched the socket of Jacob's hip in the muscle that shrank.** [This is a custom, not a commandment]

Jacob is reconciled to God. Now we turn to Jacob and Esau's relationship. **Vertical**, then **horizontal**.

## Genesis 33

### Jacob and Esau Meet

**1 Now Jacob lifted his eyes and looked, and there, Esau was coming, and with him were four hundred men** [do not assume that Esau has evil intentions—the statement about 400 men is a statement of fact, not a statement of intent]. **So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two maidservants.**

**2 And he put the maidservants and their children in front, Leah and her children behind, and Rachel and Joseph last. 3 Then he crossed over before them** [Jacob is a new man—he is now leading his family instead of hiding behind them (evidence of God’s change in his life). We will continue to see a struggle in Jacob to do what God wants him to do (much like us)] **and bowed himself to the ground seven times** [he would bow, then advance, then bow, then advance, etc.], **until he came near to his brother** [Esau].

**4 But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck** [literally, the **back** of his neck—last week, we were looking to jerk a ponytail and this week we are hugging] **and kissed him, and they wept.** [What caused Esau’s change of heart? Rebekah told Jacob that Esau would forget one day. Was she right? I do not think so. I wonder if God did. This was not just forgiveness; this was friendship. There was nothing left for Jacob and Esau to ‘work out.’] **5 And he lifted his eyes and saw the women and children, and said, “Who are these with you?”** [This should have been painful for Esau—the manifestation of the Abrahamic Covenant before his eyes]

**So he [Jacob] said, “The children whom God has graciously given your servant.” 6 Then the maidservants came near, they and their children, and bowed down. 7 And Leah also came near with her children, and they bowed down. Afterward Joseph and Rachel came near, and they bowed down.**

**8 Then Esau said, “What do you mean by all this company which I met?”**

**And he said, “These are to find favor** [favor, grace, charm] **in the sight of my lord.”**

**9 But Esau said, “I have enough [much], my brother** [not a common insight]; **keep what you have for yourself.”** [Coffman: The refusal to accept a gift means permanent enmity . . . [accepting] the gift was a token of reconciliation and everlasting peace. The same is true with God’s offer of Jesus: receive the gift and participate in permanent reconciliation, or refuse the gift and participate in permanent enmity.]

**10 And Jacob said, “No, please, if I have now found favor in your sight, then receive my present from my hand, inasmuch as I have seen your face as though I had seen the face of God, and you were pleased with me.** [Jacob had seen the face of God and he now saw human relationships in a new light]

**11 Please, take my blessing that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough [everything]**—even though it is translated the same way as Esau’s words in some Bibles, the Hebrew is different (because you can have many things without God, but you cannot have everything without God—it is only when God prevails in our lives to show us that we cannot do it on our own and that He is all in all that we can say that we have everything). **So he urged him, and he took it.**

**12 Then Esau said, “Let us take our journey; let us go, and I will go before you.”** [This is unity]

Skip down to [Genesis 33:19](#)

**13 But Jacob said to him, “My lord knows that the children *are* weak, and the flocks and herds which are nursing *are* with me. And if the men should drive them hard one day, all the flock will die. 14 Please let my lord go on ahead before his servant. I will lead on slowly at a pace which the livestock that go before me, and the children, are able to endure, until I come to my lord in Seir.”**

**15 And Esau said, “Now let me leave with you *some* of the people who *are* with me.”**

**But he said, “What need is there? Let me find favor in the sight of my lord.” 16 So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir. 17 And Jacob journeyed to Succoth [booths], built himself a house, and made booths [thicket, covert, temporary shelter] for his livestock. Therefore the name of the place is called Succoth.**

### **Jacob Comes to Canaan**

**18 Then Jacob came safely [peacefully] to the city of Shechem [the future capital of Samaria in the New Testament—see [John 4:6](#)], which *is* in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan Aram; and he pitched his tent before the city. 19 And he bought the parcel of land, where he had pitched his tent, from the children of Hamor, Shechem’s father, for one hundred pieces of money. 20 Then he erected an altar there and called it El Elohe Israel [the mighty God of [Israel](#)—now, God is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob].**

### **Apply (What is the point?)**

1. God will wrestle with us where our faith is not in harmony with His wise and holy will
2. God can restore ‘impossible-to-restore’ relationships (He is in the reconciling business)

### **Personalize (What do I do with that?)**

1. Ask God to change [me](#) first
2. Ask God to change the [situation](#) second

# The Essential 100

## A Bible overview plan for 2011-2012

The Essential 100 (E100) is a systematic approach that guides readers through the big picture of the Bible. It is a carefully selected list of short Bible passages—50 from the Old Testament and 50 from the New Testament. Each testament is broken up into ten, five-week series. We will move from Old to New Testaments every five weeks. My goal is to teach three of the five lessons in every series.

The E100 in Sunday school: We will REAP (read, explain, apply, and personalize) one passage each week and finish a series every five weeks. Each lesson will include a key verse for memorization. At the end of two years, we will have covered the essential 100 passages in the Bible.

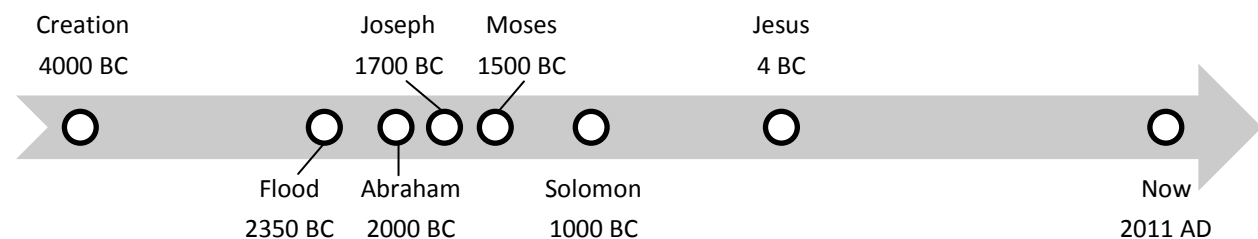
Additional information: To learn more about The E100 program and to obtain additional resources, visit [e100challenge.com](http://e100challenge.com). Our Sunday school website is [stuartheights.org/sundayschool](http://stuartheights.org/sundayschool).

## The Schedule: The Story of Joseph

This is our third five-week series in the Old Testament. So far, we have looked at In the Beginning, and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Now we shift to the last of the **Genesis** patriarchs, Joseph.

Date	Lesson	Key Verse(s)	Passage	Speaker
May 29	Sold Into Slavery	Genesis 37:26-28	Genesis 37	Jim Fleming
June 5	Prison and a Promotion	Genesis 41:14-16	Genesis 39-41	Jim Fleming
June 12	Ten Brothers Go to Egypt	Genesis 42:3-5	Genesis 42	TBD
June 19	The Brothers Return	Genesis 43:14	Genesis 43-44	Tim Archer
June 26	Joseph Reveals His Identity	Genesis 45:4-5	Genesis 45:1-46:7	Jim Fleming

Assuming a literal interpretation of Bible dates, the following timeline is close:



Summary: Joseph was his father's favorite son. Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers. God worked through a variety of circumstances to make Joseph the second most powerful man in Egypt. God used Joseph to spare Egypt and Joseph's family. The result of all of this is the book of **Exodus**. Through all of these events, God was building Joseph's character so he would be ready when God needed him.

## Preview: Family Feud

We all know that a perfect Christian looks like Jesus Christ. The real question is, “What did Jesus Christ look like?” Jesus was the perfect fulfillment of **Galatians 5:22-23a: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.**

**Rick Warren: God develops the fruit of the Spirit by allowing you to experience circumstances in which you’re tempted to express the exact opposite quality! (*The Purpose Driven Life*, p. 202)**

The following is based on, *The Purpose Driven Life*, by Rick Warren

God develops . . .	By allowing . . .
<b>Love</b>	unloving people to challenge us, tempting to us be unloving
<b>Joy</b>	sorrow, tempting us to despair and become bitter
<b>Peace</b>	times of chaos and confusion, tempting us to be agitated/stressed
<b>Longsuffering</b>	us to wait, tempting us to get angry
<b>Kindness</b>	people to be inconsiderate, tempting us to be unkind
<b>Goodness</b>	evil to intersect our lives, tempting us to be evil
<b>Faithfulness</b>	problems that challenge our trust in Him, tempting us to worry
<b>Gentleness</b>	evil to get results, tempting us to manipulate and intimidate
<b>Self-control</b>	us instant gratification, tempting us to self-indulge

Key thought: God works through the events of our lives for His good and for our good

We have all been part of family arguments. Most of the time, we like to blame one or two events that, ‘broke the camel’s back,’ but more often than not, it usually takes time for tensions to get to the boiling point (example: a tea pot will rattle slightly right before it whistles and we see that in today’s lesson). Just like some of our families, the rattling of favoritism, arrogance, jealousy, and hatred plagued Joseph.

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Genesis 37 (Author = Moses)

### Joseph Dreams of Greatness

**1 Now Jacob dwelt in the land where his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan. 2 This is the history of Jacob.** [Background—at this time, Jacob has 12 sons, 2 wives, and 2 sorta-wives.]

Jacob married Leah (and had Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah). Jacob then married Rachel (who he loved the most), who gave Jacob a handmaid, Bilhah (who had Dan and Naphtali). Leah then gave Jacob her handmaid, Zilpah (who had Gad and Asher). Leah then had Issachar, Zebulun, and Dinah. Finally, at the end, Rachel bears Joseph and later Benjamin.

Obviously, fathering children with four different women who live together is a poor strategy for having a peaceful and harmonious family.

**Joseph** [Jehovah has **added**], **being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers. And the lad was with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father’s wives** [notice that he did not

hang out near the sons of Leah or the son of Rachel, but the sons of the handmaids]; **and Joseph brought a bad report of them to his father.** [He is a tattletale]

**3 Now Israel** [God's name for Jacob] **loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic** [long, shirt-like undergarment; 'coat' is a poor translation] **of many colors** [literally, **flat** palm and/or sole; it was an undergarment that reached to the flat parts of his body (his palms and feet)—there is no Hebraic justification for calling this a coat of many colors]. **4 But when his brothers saw that their father loved him** [you can see love because love is a verb, not a noun] **more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.** [A traditional eastern greeting is, "Peace to you," and Joseph's brothers did not say, "Peace to you," to Joseph.]

**5 Now Joseph had a dream** [up to this point in **Genesis**, dreams have been used by God to convey messages and directions to men, so the natural assumption on the part of the reader of **Genesis** is that this is a message from **God** (if you are familiar with the rest of **Genesis**, this foreshadowing)], **and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more.** **6 So he said to them** [Apparently, what follows is an attempt to clarify and/or reconcile—epic fail], **"Please hear this dream which I have dreamed: 7 There we were, binding sheaves** [large bundles that cereal grains are bound up in after they are reaped] **in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf."** [Did Joseph sin by telling his brothers his dream? **No**. Did Joseph do himself any favors? **No**. We almost get the feeling that he was a bit of a punk. Also, notice the foreshadowing involved with the dream using food.]

**8 And his brothers said to him, "Shall you indeed reign** [literally, 'be a king'] **over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion** [rule, have dominion, reign] **over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.**

**9 Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me."**

**10 So he told it to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?" 11 And his brothers envied** [envied, were jealous of] **him, but his father kept the matter in mind.** [Keep in mind for later lessons that Joseph dreamed two dreams.]

David Guzik: Joseph is . . . so focused on how great his dreams are for him, he doesn't begin to consider how the dreams will sound in the ears of others.

Barry Switzer: Some people are born on third base and go through life thinking they hit a triple.

### Joseph Sold by His Brothers

**12 Then his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. 13 And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers feeding the flock in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them."**

**So he** [Joseph] **said to him** [Israel/Jacob], **"Here I am."**



**14 Then he said to him, "Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me." So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, and he went to Shechem.**

[Shechem was a few days' journey from Hebron where Jacob and Joseph were, and there is no indication that Joseph traveled with anyone, so this was a bit dangerous.]

**15 Now a certain man found him, and there he [Joseph] was, wandering in the field.** [Up to this point, Joseph has been stunningly unsuccessful] **And the man asked him, saying, "What are you seeking?"**

[Jewish commentaries generally state that this is an **angel** (which it could be, but that is not proven from the text). Some think this man might have been the Man.]

**16 So he said, "I am seeking my brothers. Please tell me where they are feeding *their flocks*."**

**17 And the man said, "They have departed from here, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan [Dothan was about a day's journey from Shechem].'" So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan.** [Finally, Joseph succeeds at something]

**18 Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired [to act craftily, act/deal knavishly (read: Jack Sparrow)] against him to kill him. 19 Then they said to one another, "Look, this dreamer is coming! 20 Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, 'Some wild beast has devoured him.' We shall see what will become of his dreams!"**

**21 But Reuben [behold, a **son** (not the most creative name in the world); the oldest] heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, "Let us not kill him." 22 And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood, *but* cast him into this pit which *is* in the wilderness, and do not lay a hand on him"—that he might deliver him out of their hands, and bring him back to his father.** [A ray of reason and hope]

**23 So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the tunic of *many* colors that *was* on him. 24 Then they took him and cast him into a pit [pit, well, cistern]. And the pit *was* empty; *there was* no water in it.**

**25 And they sat down to eat a meal.** [They were callous. Twenty-two years later, **Genesis 42:21** implies that Joseph was pleading for his life and his brothers ignored him. They remembered those cries for help for **22** years.] **Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites [their great uncle's descendants], coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry *them* down to Egypt. 26 So Judah [the fourth] said to his brothers, "What profit *is there* if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? 27 Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he *is* our brother *and* our flesh." And his brothers listened. 28 Then Midianite traders passed by; so *the brothers* pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty *shekels* of silver [a small payoff for so great a crime]. And they took Joseph to Egypt.** [Many people make a big deal out of the Ishmaelite/Midianite terms. Either (1) these people were Ishmaelites by heritage (being a descendant of Ishmael and Midianites by geography (where they lived)), or (2) the caravan that came by them was comprised of Midianites and Ishmaelites. The Bible has no errors.]



**29 Then Reuben returned to the pit** [apparently Reuben was busy doing something else from [Genesis 37:23-28](#)], **and indeed Joseph was not in the pit; and he tore his clothes. 30 And he returned to his brothers and said, “The lad is no more; and I, where shall I go?”** [If Reuben really knew the true implications of this act of selling Joseph—the fact that his descendants would ultimately be slaved to the Egyptians for centuries, he would have done more than just torn his clothes]

**31 So they took Joseph’s tunic, killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the blood** [When I sin, something has to **bleed**; Jamieson, Fausset, Brown: **The commission of one sin necessarily leads to another to conceal it**]. **32 Then they sent the tunic of many colors, and they brought it to their father and said, “We have found this. Do you know whether it is your son’s tunic or not?”**

**33 And he recognized it and said, “It is my son’s tunic. A wild beast has devoured him. Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces.” 34 Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist, and mourned for his son many days.** [Coffman: **Jacob was completely deceived. . . . Jacob himself was the deceiver of his father Isaac, in the matter of procuring the blessing. And now, the deceiver is deceived.**] **35 And all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and he said, “For I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning.” Thus his father wept for him.** [The consequences of sin always involve mourning and tears.]

**36 Now the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar** [belonging to the sun], **an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard.**

Coffman: Here, then, is the conclusion of the events of this chapter, leaving Reuben filled with remorse, Jacob in perpetual mourning, and Joseph (the future savior of the nation) a slave to one of Pharaoh's officers in Egypt! The fortunes of Israel appear very low at this point.

You will have to come back next week to find out what happens to Joseph. On the other hand, you could just read [Genesis 39-41](#).

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. Over communicating good things can sometimes be a **bad** thing
2. A house divided against itself cannot stand
3. God is working even when we cannot **see** Him working or know that He is working

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Show tact when sharing truth (we do not have to use bullhorns or baseball bats)
2. Insure there is no **favoritism** in my family
3. Grow from the challenges in my life (because they are opportunities from God)

# The Story of Joseph: Prison and a Promotion

---

## Preview: No Fair! (Or, Crock-Pot Character)

Joseph has been sold into slavery by his brothers and now he is in Egypt. When we looked at Joseph's life last week, he was an egotistical teenager who irritated his family. This week we will see Joseph mature. His life will seem unfair, but remember that God is interested in developing our character.

**David Guzik: Egypt had been a large and thriving kingdom for at least a thousand years before Joseph came there. They were wealthy and had massive natural resources. They were educated and had no real enemies at the time. When Joseph came to Egypt, some of the pyramids already looked old, and the Sphinx had already been carved.**

Key thought: God is not in a **hurry** (no matter how badly we want Him to be)

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Genesis 39-41 (Author = Moses)

### Genesis 39

#### Joseph a Slave in Egypt

**1 Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt** [Joseph is **17** at this point]. **And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there.** **2 The LORD was with Joseph, and he was a successful** [prosperous, successful] **man** [(1) God is behind Joseph's success]; **and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.** **3 And his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD made all he did to prosper in his hand** [(2) God is behind Joseph's success]. **4 So Joseph found favor** [favor, grace, charm—we will see this many times in the Old Testament] **in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority.** **5 So it was, from the time that he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had in the house and in the field** [(3) God is behind Joseph's success]. **6 Thus he left** [departed from, left behind, abandoned, forsook, neglected] **all that he had in Joseph's hand, and he did not know what he had except for the bread which he ate** [serious trust].

**Now Joseph was handsome** [fair, beautiful, handsome] **in form** [shape, form, outline, figure, appearance] **and appearance** [sight, appearance, vision]. [Why was Joseph attractive? Probably Rachel (the same was said about her)]

**7 And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, "Lie** [have sex] **with me."**

**8 But he refused and said** [he refused first and **explained** second] **to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand.** **9 There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin** [sin, miss the goal, miss the

way] **against God?**" [David Guzik: We want to call sin by another name. Hostility and temper are "self-expression." Pride is "self-esteem." Gluttony is "the good life." Covetousness is "trying to get ahead." Perversion is "an alternative lifestyle." Adultery is "a cry for help in a bad marriage."]

Friedman: It was to see whether he was truly fit to become ruler of Egypt. By passing the test, he proved that he would be able to rule over the land of impurity and immorality without succumbing to its corrupting influence himself.

**10 So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her.**

**11 But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house was inside, 12 that she caught** [seized, arrested, caught] **him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left** [departed from, left behind, abandoned, forsook, neglected] **his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside** [perfectly fulfilling 2 Timothy 2:22. David Guzik: God provides a way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13), but you have to **take** the way out.]. **13 And so it was, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and fled** [fled, escaped, took flight, departed, disappeared] **outside, 14 that she called to the men of her house and spoke to them, saying, "See, he has brought in to us a Hebrew to mock us** [do not miss the fact that she is slandering her husband]. **He came in to me to lie with me** [lie], **and I cried out with a loud voice** [lie]. **15 And it happened, when he heard that I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me** [lie], **and fled and went outside** [truth]." [Coffman: One of Satan's cleverest clichés, "Wherever there's smoke, there's bound to be fire!" Well, here, there was a lot of smoke, and no fire at all!]

**16 So she kept his garment with her until his master came home. 17 Then she spoke to him with words like these, saying, "The Hebrew servant whom you brought to us came in to me to mock me** [this is a different version of the story she told the men of the house]; **18 so it happened, as I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me and fled outside."**

**19 So it was, when his master heard the words which his wife spoke to him, saying, "Your servant did to me after this manner," that his anger** [wrath, anger, nostrils] **was aroused. 20 Then Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were confined. And he was there in the prison. 21 But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy** [Hebrew, **checed**: goodness, kindness, faithfulness; this is a word that we will see almost 250 times in the Old Testament and a word that I believe is the theme of the Old Testament], **and He gave him favor** [favor, grace, charm] **in the sight of the keeper of the prison** [(4) God is behind Joseph's success]. **22 And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners who were in the prison** [we see a pattern of masters giving Joseph responsibility]; **whatever they did there, it was his doing. 23 The keeper of the prison did not look into anything that was under Joseph's authority, because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made it prosper** [(5) God is behind Joseph's success]. [David Guzik: As it was in the house of Potiphar, Joseph rises to the top, becoming the chief administrator of the prison. Through his experience in both places, God is honing administrative skills in Joseph so one day he can save his family, and the whole world.]

## Genesis 40

### The Prisoners' Dreams

**1 It came to pass after these things** [Joseph is now **28**] **that the butler** [literally, the irrigator (the giver of drink)—this was the same position that Nehemiah] **and the baker of the king of Egypt offended** [sinned, missed the goal, missed the way] **their lord, the king of Egypt. 2 And Pharaoh** [another title (not name) for the king of Egypt] **was angry with his two officers, the chief butler and the chief baker. 3 So he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison, the place where Joseph was confined. 4 And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them; so they were in custody for a while.**

**5 Then the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in the prison, had a dream, both of them, each man's dream in one night and each man's dream with its own interpretation. 6 And Joseph came in to them in the morning and looked at them, and saw that they were sad** [fretting, sad, wrath, vexed, enraged, angry perplexed, troubled]. **7 So he asked Pharaoh's officers who were with him in the custody of his lord's house, saying, "Why do you look so sad** [evil (totally different Hebrew word)] **today?"** [David Guzik: This is a window to the heart of Joseph. Men who are consumed with anger and bitterness do not take a concern for the personal problems of others like this. I do not know when or where it happened, but this Joseph is very different from the 17-year-old in [Genesis 37](#).]

**8 And they said to him, "We each have had a dream, and there is no interpreter of it."** [**two** dreams]

**So Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God?** [To whom do interpretations belong? God. Do not try to interpret your dreams unless God interprets them for you.] **Tell them to me, please."**

**9 Then the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, "Behold, in my dream a vine was before me, 10 and in the vine were three branches; it was as though it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and its clusters brought forth ripe grapes. 11 Then Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand."** [His prior job]

**12 And Joseph said to him, "This is the interpretation of it: The three branches are three days. 13 Now within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your place, and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand according to the former manner, when you were his butler. 14 But remember me when it is well with you, and please show kindness to me; make mention of me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house. 15 For indeed I was stolen away** [by stealth] **from the land of the Hebrews; and also I have done nothing here that they should put me into the dungeon** [pit, well]."

**16 When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said to Joseph, "I also was in my dream, and there were three white baskets on my head. 17 In the uppermost basket were all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, and the birds ate them out of the basket on my head."**

**18 So Joseph answered and said, "This is the interpretation of it: The three baskets are three days. 19 Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head from you and hang you on a tree; and the birds will eat your flesh from you."** [Joseph spoke **directly** when giving God's messages. Blurred truth is no truth.]

**20** Now it came to pass on the third day, *which was Pharaoh's birthday*, that he made a feast for all his servants; and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants. **21** Then he restored the chief butler to his butlership again, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand. **22** But he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them. **23** Yet the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot [cease to care] him. [David Guzik: God orders both your *steps* and *stops*!]

## Genesis 41

### Pharaoh's Dreams

**1** Then it came to pass, at the end of two full years [Joseph is now **30**], that Pharaoh had a dream; and behold, he stood by the river ["Nile" in some translations]. **2** Suddenly there came up out of the river seven cows, fine [fair, beautiful, handsome] looking [sight, appearance, vision—the same words used to describe Joseph] and fat [really fat—like Moto Moto in Madagascar]; and they fed in the meadow. **3** Then behold, seven other cows came up after them out of the river, ugly and gaunt, and stood by the other cows on the bank of the river. **4** And the ugly and gaunt cows ate up the seven fine looking and fat cows. So Pharaoh awoke. **5** He slept and dreamed a second time; and suddenly seven heads of grain came up on one stalk, plump [fat] and good. **6** Then behold, seven thin heads, blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them. **7** And the seven thin heads devoured the seven plump and full heads. So Pharaoh awoke, and indeed, *it was a dream*. **8** Now it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled [disturbed], and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men. And Pharaoh told them his dreams, but *there was* no one who could interpret them for Pharaoh. [How many dreams did Pharaoh have? Two. Coffman: Only one voice speaks throughout Genesis. Only one power controls its events. That voice and power are those of God.]

**9** Then the chief butler spoke to Pharaoh, saying: "I remember my faults [sin] this day. **10** When Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and put me in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, both me and the chief baker, **11** we each had a dream in one night, he and I. Each of us dreamed according to the interpretation of his own dream. **12** Now there was a young Hebrew man with us there, a servant of the captain of the guard. And we told him, and he interpreted our dreams for us; to each man he interpreted according to his own dream. **13** And it came to pass, just as he interpreted for us, so it happened. He restored me to my office, and he hanged him."

**14** Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him quickly [running] out of the dungeon; and he shaved [Jamieson, Fausset, Brown: The Egyptians were the only Oriental nation that liked a smooth chin], changed his clothing, and came to Pharaoh. [Coffman: The shaving and dressing of Joseph were required by the rules for those appearing before Pharaoh] **15** And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, and *there is* no one who can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that you can understand a dream, to interpret it."

**16** So Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, "*It is not in me* [Loosely paraphrased, "It's not about me"]; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace [Hebrew is *shalom*: completeness, soundness, peace]."

**17** Then Pharaoh said to Joseph: "Behold, in my dream I stood on the bank of the river. **18** Suddenly seven cows came up out of the river, fine looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow. **19** Then

behold, seven other cows came up after them, poor and very ugly and gaunt, such ugliness as I have never seen in all the land of Egypt. 20 And the gaunt and ugly cows ate up the first seven, the fat cows. 21 When they had eaten them up, no one would have known that they had eaten them, for they *were* just as ugly as at the beginning. So I awoke. 22 Also I saw in my dream, and suddenly seven heads came up on one stalk, full and good. 23 Then behold, seven heads, withered, thin, *and* blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them. 24 And the thin heads devoured the seven good heads. So I told *this* to the magicians, but *there was* no one who could explain *it* to me.”

25 Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, “The dreams of Pharaoh *are* one; God has shown Pharaoh what He *is* about to do: 26 The seven good cows *are* seven years, and the seven good heads *are* seven years; the dreams *are* one [Joseph **repeats** himself for clarity]. 27 And the seven thin and ugly cows which came up after them *are* seven years, and the seven empty heads blighted by the east wind are seven years of famine. 28 *This is* the thing which I have spoken to Pharaoh. God has shown Pharaoh what He *is* about to do. 29 Indeed seven years of great plenty will come throughout all the land of Egypt; 30 but after them seven years of famine will arise, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine will deplete the land. 31 So the plenty will not be known in the land because of the famine following, for it *will be* very severe. 32 And the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing *is* established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass. [Joseph could have stopped talking in **Genesis 41:32**. Pharaoh did not ask for a solution. However, Joseph has an opportunity.]

33 “Now therefore, let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man [and since none of Pharaoh’s other wise men could possibly qualify at this point, Joseph is creating his own **job** description], and set him over the land of Egypt. 34 Let Pharaoh do *this*, and let him appoint officers over the land, to collect one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt in the seven plentiful years [David Guzik: It was customary for the Pharaoh to take 10% of the grain as a tax. Essentially, he doubled the taxes over the next seven years]. 35 And let them gather all the food of those good years that are coming, and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. 36 Then that food shall be as a reserve [store, supply, deposit] for the land for the seven years of famine which shall be in the land of Egypt, that the land may not perish during the famine.”

### Joseph’s Rise to Power

37 So the advice was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants. 38 And Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find *such a one* as this, a man in whom *is* the Spirit of God?”

39 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, *there is* no one as discerning and wise as you. 40 You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you.” 41 And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.”

42 Then Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph’s hand [so Joseph could sign/**seal** public documents]; and he clothed him in garments of fine linen [the second time in Joseph’s life he has been given fine clothing] and put a gold chain around his neck. 43 And he had him ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried out before him, “Bow the knee!” So he set him over

all the land of Egypt. **44** Pharaoh also said to Joseph, “I *am* Pharaoh, and without your consent no man may lift his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.” **45** And Pharaoh called Joseph’s name Zaphnath-Paaneah [treasury of the glorious rest]. And he gave him as a wife Asenath [belonging to the goddess Neith], the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On [the center of the worship of the sun-god Ra]. So Joseph went out over *all* the land of Egypt.

**46** Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt. **47** Now in the seven plentiful years the ground brought forth abundantly. **48** So he gathered up all the food of the seven years which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities; he laid up in every city the food of the fields which surrounded them. **49** Joseph gathered very much grain, as the sand of the sea, until he stopped counting, for *it was* immeasurable.

**50** And to Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, whom Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On, bore to him. **51** Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh [causing to forget]: “For God has made me forget all my toil and all my father’s house.” **52** And the name of the second he called Ephraim [double ash-heap: I shall be doubly fruitful]: “For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.” [He is not fully Egyptian since he gave both his sons Hebrew names]

**53** Then the seven years of plenty which were in the land of Egypt ended, **54** and the seven years of famine began to come, as Joseph had said. The famine was in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. **55** So when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. Then Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, “Go to Joseph; whatever he says to you, do.” **56** The famine was over all the face of the earth, and Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold to the Egyptians. And the famine became severe in the land of Egypt. **57** So all countries came to Joseph in Egypt to buy *grain*, because the famine was severe in all lands. [God used him to help spare the world]

Challenge: Be patient with God in everything (He is always working: [Romans 8:28](#)). David Guzik: Joseph is a good example of man who seemed to have all the gifts and talents for leadership, but God put him in a place where his character would be developed, and this took many years. Gifts and talents may be impressive and immediate, but character is what God looks for and always takes time to develop.

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. Timing is everything (and God’s timing is sometimes impossible to understand)
2. Faithfulness is always rewarded (either here and in heaven, or just in heaven)
3. God will use anything to accomplish His will (pagans, family, plenty, famine, etc.)

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Be content with the timing and leave the timing up to God (just be [1 Peter 3:15](#) and [Luke 12:11-12](#))
2. Be faithful in everything God puts in front of you, no matter how small, annoying, or meaningless it may seem ([1 Corinthians 4:2](#))
3. Be looking for God at work and thank Him when you see His hand ([1 Peter 5:6](#))



# The Story of Joseph: Ten Brothers Go to Egypt

---

## Preview: Remember, remember

Summary: Joseph was his father's favorite son with his father's favorite wife. Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers because he told them they would bow down to him. God worked through a variety of painful circumstances to make Joseph the second most powerful man in Egypt. Last week, we saw Joseph transform from an egotistical teenager into a mature man. Joseph's life seems unfair, but God used all of these things to develop Joseph's character. However, the sin of Joseph's brothers still has to be dealt with. Now, we see Joseph with the opportunity to do anything he wants to his brothers.

Key thought: Character development takes **time** (last week was Joseph, this week is his brothers)

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Genesis 42 (Author = Moses)

### Joseph's Brothers Go to Egypt

**1 When Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, "Why do you look at one another [literally, look questionably at one another (it was because they were guilty)]?" 2 And he said, "Indeed I have heard that there is grain in Egypt [mention of Egypt made them **nervous**; Barnhouse: The word *Egypt* in their ears must have sounded like the word *rope* in the house of a man who has hanged himself]; go down to that place and buy for us there, that we may live and not die."** [A guilty conscience can keep you from doing what needs to be done. We see a pattern here in **Genesis** of going to Egypt before being used greatly—the same thing happened with Abram in **Genesis 12** (and we will see it repeatedly in the Bible that God uses a tough place to prepare His people).]

**3 So Joseph's ten brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt. 4 But Jacob did not send Joseph's brother Benjamin [son of the right hand] with his brothers, for he said, "Lest some calamity befall him."** [exactly the same verbiage as Don Corleone used in The Godfather about his son Michael: "If some unlucky accident should befall him"; Joseph was Jacob's favorite, now Jacob thinks that Joseph is dead, Benjamin is now Jacob's favorite—Jacob never saw the **folly** of picking favorites in his family; Jacob missed God's hand in all of this—God had been working for over 20 years to allow Joseph to provide for his family] **5 And the sons of Israel went to buy grain among those who journeyed, for the famine was in the land of Canaan.** [Canaan was close to Egypt and famine in Egypt meant famine in Canaan]

**6 Now Joseph was governor over the land; and it was he who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed down before him with *their* faces to the earth** [Do you remember Joseph's dreams in **Genesis 37**? His first was that he and his brothers were sheaves and that they would bow down to him—and here it happens (because of corn, nonetheless). **David Guzik: When Joseph's brothers plotted murder against him and sold him into slavery, they did it specifically attempting to defeat his dreams (Genesis 37:19-20). Instead, by sending Joseph to Egypt, they provided the way the dreams would be fulfilled!]. 7 Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he acted as a stranger to them and spoke roughly [cruelly, severely] to them. Then he said to them, "Where do you come from?" And they said, "From the land of Canaan to buy food."**



**8 So Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him.** [EasyEnglish: There were many reasons why the brothers did not recognize Joseph. These are some of the reasons.

- They believed that Joseph was dead. This may or may not be true, but if you repeat a lie long enough to yourself and others, many times you end up believing it yourself
- Joseph had shaved his beard off.
- Joseph spoke in the Egyptian language and an interpreter translated. [We find this out in v 23]
- Joseph wore Egyptian clothes.
- Joseph had an Egyptian name.]

**9 Then Joseph remembered the dreams which he had dreamed about them** [John Wesley: The laying up of God's oracles in our hearts will be of excellent use to us in all our conduct], **and said to them, "You are spies! You have come to see the nakedness of the land!"** [This may sound strange in our ears, but spying out the land this way was a common technique for invading armies to use]

**10 And they said to him, "No, my lord, but your servants have come to buy food. 11 We are all one man's sons** [How can one small family take over the whole country of Egypt? What man would risk ten sons to spy out a land?]; **we are honest men; your servants are not spies."**

**12 But he said to them, "No, but you have come to see the nakedness of the land."**

**13 And they said, "Your servants are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and in fact, the youngest is with our father today, and one is no more** [they told this story for 20+ years]."

**14 But Joseph said to them, "It is as I spoke to you, saying, 'You are spies!' 15 In this manner you shall be tested: By the life of Pharaoh, you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here. 16 Send one of you, and let him bring your brother; and you shall be kept in prison, that your words may be tested to see whether there is any truth in you; or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies!"** [Coffman: Every accused was considered guilty until proved innocent, and the burden of proof was always upon the defendant] **17 So he put them all together in prison three days.**

**18 Then Joseph said to them the third day, "Do this and live, for I fear God** [this is the generic word for god and not a specific word for the Hebrew God, Jehovah, so Joseph's brother's thought that he was just religious, but Joseph knew what he was saying]: **19 If you are honest men, let one of your brothers be confined to your prison house** [Joseph changes his directions—in Genesis 42:16, he tells them he is only going to send one of them, but now he says he is going to send nine of them (maybe nine sons would convince Jacob more effectively?)); **but you, go and carry grain for the famine of your houses. 20 And bring your youngest brother to me; so your words will be verified, and you shall not die."**

**And they did so. 21 Then they said to one another, "We are truly guilty** [Adam Clarke: God combines and brings about those favourable circumstances which produce attention and reflection, and give weight to the expostulations of conscience; Their consciences were killing them] **concerning our brother, for we saw the anguish** [Hebrew, *tsarah*; straits, distress, trouble; used of the relationship between a first wife and a second wife] **of his soul when he pleaded with us** [when Joseph cried for his

life in the **pit** they threw him in], **and we would not hear; therefore this distress has come upon us.**" [This was probably the worst skeleton in their closets—and it was haunting them. I think they thought about Joseph all those years and their consciences were pricked. God uses many things to quicken my conscience to my sin. It is almost as if God is saying, "You might have forgotten about this sin, but I have not." Dad: **Galatians (6:7). David Guzik: A guilty conscience sees every trouble as sin's penalty.**]

**David Guzik: Some have described the conscience as the "sundial of the soul." It tells time well enough when there is light, but in darkness it is of no use. At night, you could shine a flashlight on a sundial and make it read any time you want it to. When the light of God's word shines on our conscience, it is reliable and trustworthy. Otherwise, our conscience can be like a circus-trained poodle. Whistle once, it stands up. Whistle twice, it rolls over. Whistle a third time, and it plays dead.**

**22 And Reuben answered them, saying, "Did I not speak to you, saying, 'Do not sin against the boy'; and you would not listen? Therefore behold, his blood is now required of us."** [In any group, there is usually someone who is just waiting to say, "I told you so."] **23 But they did not know that Joseph understood them, for he spoke to them through an interpreter. 24 And he [Joseph] turned himself away from them and wept** [Joseph was probably learning for the first time that Reuben tried to save him over 20 years ago—this would be overwhelming news]. **Then he [Joseph] returned to them again, and talked with them. And he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes.**

Can you imagine Joseph's brother's emotions at this point? This would have been almost unbearable. Many of the commentators believe that Simeon was the one that bound Joseph and put him in the pit in **Genesis 37** (due to his unconscionable actions in **Genesis 34** with the Dinah incident). I think Simeon can represent the prison of our past—sometimes we feel bound by prior actions (sin does that).

### **The Brothers Return to Canaan**

**25 Then Joseph gave a command to fill their sacks with grain, to restore every man's money to his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. Thus he did for them.** [This is a beautiful picture of what the **trinity** does for us—Jesus is the bread of life, we have us the treasure of the Holy Spirit, and the Father gives us gifts to help us along the way] **26 So they loaded their donkeys** [probably a hundred or more (think about the fact that these brothers all had wives and children and servants and animals)—this was a big caravan] **with the grain and departed from there.** [EasyEnglish: To give honor to one's father was very important in those days. Joseph would never take money from his own father. But the money that his brothers brought belonged to their father. Therefore, Joseph could not take the money from them. But he could not refuse the money. If he refused it, he would need to explain his reason. He would need to say that he was their brother. And he was not yet ready to say that. So he returned the money to them secretly.] **27 But as one of them opened his sack** [from the Hebrew, **sak**] **to give his donkey feed at the encampment** [some of your translations say, 'inn,' and this is incorrect as there were no inns at this time—the word means the place you stop (usually at a well)], **he saw his money; and there it was, in the mouth of his sack. 28 So he said to his brothers, "My money has been restored, and there it is, in my sack!" Then their hearts failed them** [their hearts dropped] **and they were afraid** [literally, they trembled], **saying to one another, "What is this that God has done to us?"** [EasyEnglish: The brothers did not understand what was happening. Therefore they were **afraid**. They

did not understand why the ruler of the country himself spoke with them. They expected to buy grain from a less important person. They did not understand why Joseph spoke severely to them. They did not understand why he called them spies. . . They did not understand why he put them in prison. They did not understand why Joseph wanted to see Benjamin. They did not understand why Joseph kept Simeon in Egypt. And they did not understand why the money was in the sack.]

**29** Then they went to Jacob their father in the land of Canaan and told him all that had happened to them, saying: **30** “The man *who is* lord of the land spoke roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country. **31** But we said to him, ‘We *are* honest *men*; we are not spies. **32** We *are* twelve brothers, sons of our father; one *is* no *more*, and the youngest *is* with our father this day in the land of Canaan.’ **33** Then the man, the lord of the country, said to us, ‘By this I will know that you *are* honest *men*: Leave one of your brothers *here* with me, take *food for* the famine of your households, and be gone. **34** And bring your youngest brother to me; so I shall know that you *are* not spies, but *that you are* honest *men*. I will grant your brother to you, and you may trade in the land.’”

**35** Then it happened as they emptied their sacks, that surprisingly each man’s bundle of money *was* in his sack; and when they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid [in awe]. **36** And Jacob their father said to them, “You have bereaved me: Joseph is no *more*, Simeon is no *more*, and you want to take Benjamin. All these things are against me.” [Easy English: We may sometimes be in a situation that is similar to this. It seems to us that God’s promises are failing. It seems that God’s plan is not working. And God has not told us what to do. . . . We must trust him, especially when it is difficult to trust him. Actually, God’s plan was working well. . . . Joseph was ready to save them all. David Guzik: Jacob’s heart sang this song: “No one loves me, this I know. My misfortunes tell me so.”]

**37** Then Reuben spoke to his father, saying, “Kill my two sons if I do not bring him *back* to you; put him in my hands, and I will bring him back to you.” [What strange volatility this is! When Jacob is talking to his sons at the end of his life in [Genesis 49](#), he calls Reuben, ‘*unstable as water*.’]

**38** But he said, “My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is left alone [Again with the favorites! Rachel died in childbirth with Benjamin, so Joseph and Benjamin were all that Jacob had to remind him of Rachel. The thought of losing Benjamin was too great to comprehend.]. **If any calamity should befall him along the way in which you go, then you would bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave.**” [Jacob seems relatively unconcerned about going back to get Simeon]

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. David Guzik: God can, and must, sometimes use ways we think are harsh to call us to where He wants us to be
2. People can change (and if you do not believe this, then you have missed Christianity)
3. [Numbers 32:23b](#): Be sure your sin will find you out.

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Examine my heart to see if there is any sin that needs to be uncovered
2. Allow the space and time necessary for people to change (it does not happen immediately)
3. Be on the lookout for ways to show meekness (strength under control)

# The Story of Joseph: The Brothers Return

---

## Review

Joseph has allowed his brothers to return home with the grain they purchased. Simeon is being held hostage in Egypt until the youngest of the sons is brought back to meet Joseph/Zaphnath-Paaneah. The sons arrived home to discover that the money they had bought the food with was in their grain sacks.

## Primary Character Review

Jacob/Israel: "Fearful" and aging patriarch

Joseph: Original favorite son of Jacob born to Jacob's wife Rachel who has been (or so his family thought) dead to his family for over 20 years, moonlighting as Zaphnath-Paaneah, Vizier and second in command to the Pharaoh/King of Egypt

Benjamin: "New" favorite son of Jacob, born to Jacob's wife Rachel and Benjamin is Joseph's full brother (all of the other brothers were half-brothers)

Reuben: Firstborn son and rightful family leader

Judah: Led brothers into selling Joseph into slavery

Simeon: Half-brother to Joseph, being held hostage in Egypt

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Genesis 43-44 (Author = Moses)

### Genesis 43

1. Hunger is a **motivator** (1-2)

**1 Now the famine was severe in the land. 2 And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the grain which they had brought from Egypt, that their father said to them, "Go back, buy us a little food."** [No mention of Simeon, just of the food]

2. Judah takes a **lead** role (3-5). This is ironic because Judah took a lead role in the selling of Joseph (but do not miss the fact that Reuben had already offered to go and retrieve Simeon).

**3 But Judah spoke to him, saying, "The man solemnly warned us, saying, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.' 4 If you send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. 5 But if you will not send him, we will not go down; for the man said to us, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.'"**

3. Jacob/Israel is **motivated** by fear and begins accusing others (6-7). Fear can motivate us to do positive or negative things. Joseph reached a point in his life where he was overly protective of what he had.

**6 And Israel said, “Why did you deal so wrongfully with me *as* to tell the man whether you had still *another* brother?”**

**7 But they said, “The man asked us pointedly about ourselves and our family, saying, ‘Is your father still alive? Have you *another* brother?’ And we told him according to these words. Could we possibly have known that he would say, ‘Bring your brother down?’”**

4. Judah’s sales pitch (8-10)

**8 Then Judah said to Israel his father, “Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and you *and* also our little ones** [Judah brings up the hungry kids—who could resist hungry kids?]. **9 I myself will be surety for him; from my hand you shall require him. If I do not bring him *back* to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever. 10 For if we had not lingered, surely by now we would have returned this second time.”**

5. Jacob’s plan revealed (11-15)

- a. Doubled money
- b. Additional gifts to be sent
- c. Supplication to God Almighty

**11 And their father Israel said to them, “If *it must be* so, then do this: Take some of the best fruits of the land in your vessels and carry down a present for the man—a little balm and a little honey, spices and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds. 12 Take double money in your hand, and take back in your hand the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks; perhaps it was an oversight. 13 Take your brother also, and arise, go back to the man. 14 And may God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may release your other brother and Benjamin. If I am bereaved, I am bereaved!”**

**15 So the men took that present and Benjamin, and they took double money in their hand, and arose and went down to Egypt; and they stood before Joseph.**

6. Zaphnath-Paaneah’s/Joseph’s reaction: plan a **party** (16-17)

**16 When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, “Take *these* men to my home, and slaughter an animal and make ready; for *these* men will dine with me at noon.” 17 Then the man did as Joseph ordered, and the man brought the men into Joseph’s house.** [This is personal, as this meeting did not occur in the grain market, but in Joseph’s house]

7. Fear caused **excuses** (18-22)

**18 Now the men were afraid because they were brought into Joseph’s house; and they said, “*It is because of the money, which was returned in our sacks the first time, that we are brought in, so that he may make a case against us and seize us, to take us as slaves with our donkeys.*”**

**19** When they drew near to the steward of Joseph's house, they talked with him at the door of the house, **20** and said, "O sir, we indeed came down the first time to buy food; **21** but it happened, when we came to the encampment, that we opened our sacks, and there, *each* man's money *was* in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight; so we have brought it back in our hand. **22** And we have brought down other money in our hands to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks."

8. Important **hints** are missed (**23-25**)

**23** But he said, "Peace *be* with you, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money." Then he brought Simeon out to them.

**24** So the man brought the men into Joseph's house and gave *them* water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their donkeys feed. **25** Then they made the present ready for Joseph's coming at noon, for they heard that they would eat bread there.

9. The brothers are reunited and prophecy is fulfilled (**26-34**)

**26** And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which *was* in their hand into the house, and bowed down before him to the earth [fulfillment #1]. **27** Then he asked them about *their* well-being, and said, "*Is* your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? *Is* he still alive?"

**28** And they answered, "Your servant our father *is* in good health; he *is* still alive." And they bowed their heads down and prostrated themselves [fulfillment #2].

**29** Then he lifted his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, "*Is* this your younger brother of whom you spoke to me?" And he said, "God be gracious to you, my son." **30** Now his heart yearned for his brother; so Joseph made haste and sought *somewhere* to weep. And he went into *his* chamber and wept there. **31** Then he washed his face and came out; and he restrained himself, and said, "Serve the bread."

**32** So they set him a place by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves; because the Egyptians could not eat food with the Hebrews, for that *is* an abomination to the Egyptians. **33** And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth; and the men looked in astonishment at one another. **34** Then he took servings to them from before him, but Benjamin's serving was five times as much as any of theirs. So they drank and were merry with him.

## Genesis 44

10. The **trap** is set (**1-6**)

**1** And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, “Fill the men’s sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man’s money in the mouth of his sack. **2** Also put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his grain money.” So he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken. **3** As soon as the morning dawned, the men were sent away, they and their donkeys. **4** When they had gone out of the city, *and* were not yet far off, Joseph said to his steward, “Get up, follow the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, ‘Why have you repaid evil for good? **5** *Is not this the one* from which my lord drinks, and with which he indeed practices divination? *You have done evil in so doing.*’” [Joseph may or may not have practiced pagan worship. In any case, Joseph is playing a role here that is obviously not being completely transparent.]

**6** So he overtook them, and he spoke to them these same words.

11. The **trap** is sprung (7-13)

**7** And they said to him, “Why does my lord say these words? Far be it from us that your servants should do such a thing. **8** Look, we brought back to you from the land of Canaan the money which we found in the mouth of our sacks. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord’s house? **9** With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord’s slaves.”

**10** And he said, “Now also *let it be* according to your words; he with whom it is found shall be my slave, and you shall be blameless.” **11** Then each man speedily let down his sack to the ground, and each opened his sack. **12** So he searched. He began with the oldest and left off with the youngest; and the cup was found in Benjamin’s sack. **13** Then they tore their clothes, and each man loaded his donkey and returned to the city.

12. Judah’s **character** is revealed (14-17)

**14** So Judah and his brothers came to Joseph’s house, and he *was* still there; and they fell before him on the ground [fulfillment #3]. **15** And Joseph said to them, “What deed *is* this you have done? Did you not know that such a man as I can certainly practice divination?”

**16** Then Judah said, “What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants; here we are, my lord’s slaves, both we and *he* also with whom the cup was found.”

**17** But he said, “Far be it from me that I should do so; the man in whose hand the cup was found, he shall be my slave. And as for you, go up in peace to your father.”

13. The **maturity** of Judah is complete (18-34)

**18** Then Judah came near to him and said: “O my lord, please let your servant speak a word in my lord’s hearing, and do not let your anger burn against your servant; for you *are* even like Pharaoh. **19** My lord asked his servants, saying, ‘Have you a father or a brother?’ **20** And we said to my lord, ‘We have a father, an old man, and a child of *his* old age, *who is* young; his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother’s children, and his father loves him.’ **21** Then you said to your servants, ‘Bring him

down to me, that I may set my eyes on him.’ 22 And we said to my lord, ‘The lad cannot leave his father, for *if* he should leave his father, *his father* would die.’ 23 But you said to your servants, ‘Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall see my face no more.’

24 “So it was, when we went up to your servant my father, that we told him the words of my lord. 25 And our father said, ‘Go back *and* buy us a little food.’ 26 But we said, ‘We cannot go down; if our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down; for we may not see the man’s face unless our youngest brother *is* with us.’ 27 Then your servant my father said to us, ‘You know that my wife bore me two sons; 28 and the one went out from me, and I said, “Surely he is torn to pieces”; and I have not seen him since. 29 But if you take this one also from me, and calamity befalls him, you shall bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave.’

30 “Now therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad *is* not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad’s life, 31 it will happen, when he sees that the lad *is* not *with us*, that he will die. So your servants will bring down the gray hair of your servant our father with sorrow to the grave. 32 For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, ‘If I do not bring him *back* to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father forever.’ 33 Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad as a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers. 34 For how shall I go up to my father if the lad *is* not with me, lest perhaps I see the evil that would come upon my father?”

### Apply (What is the point?): Psalm 27:1; Proverbs 3:5-6

1. Hardships bring opportunity
2. Growing up is tough sometimes
3. Things are not always as they seem (God is not yet finished)

### Personalize (What do I do with that?): 2 Timothy 1:7

1. How often does fear cause me to miss God-given opportunities?
2. What relationships do I need to offer and/or ask forgiveness in?



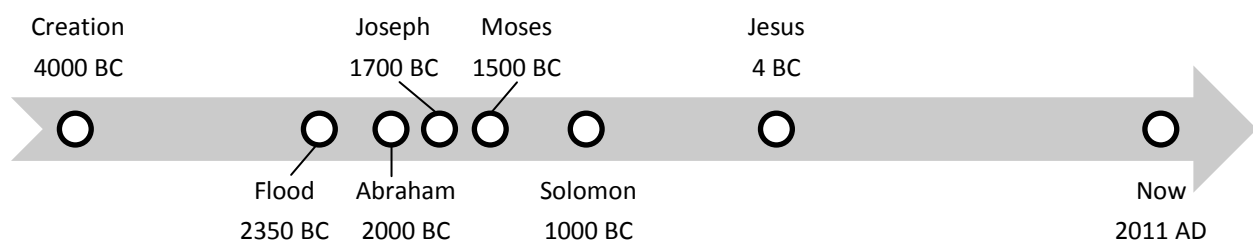
# The Story of Joseph: Joseph Reveals His Identity

## Review: Genesis

Today we finish not only the story of Joseph, but also the 15 weeks we have spent in **Genesis**. We looked at creation, the fall of man, the flood, the God's covenant with Noah, the Tower of Babel, as well as the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Here are some things we have learned from **Genesis**:

1. God sets the stage for the rest of the Bible concerning His word (**Genesis 1:7c**: "and it was so")
2. God takes the initiative (**Genesis 1-46**)
3. God fills (**Genesis 1**)
4. **Sin** changes everything (Adam & Eve)
5. God provides (the sacrifice for Adam & Eve's sin)
6. Unity without proper direction is unprofitable (Tower of Babel)
7. God uses people who do not deserve to be used (Abram)
8. God does the impossible (Abram & Sarai)
9. Blood is required in covenants (Abramic Covenant)
10. Faith is complete obedience to God's word (Abraham & Isaac)
11. Favoritism in families is toxic (Jacob & Esau)
12. The ends do not justify the means (it is never right to do wrong in order to get a chance to do right)
13. Reconciliation requires change (Jacob & Esau)
14. God is working even when we cannot see Him working (Joseph)
15. God is not in a **hurry** (Joseph)
16. God can use almost anything in character development (Joseph)
17. People can change (Joseph's brothers)
18. God is not yet **finished**

Assuming a literal interpretation of Bible dates, the following timeline is close:



What is remarkable to me is the sheer volume of time that **Genesis** takes up in our world history. Almost **40%** of the history of the entire world occurs in **Genesis**. That is the reason we spent 15 weeks there.

Now, to summarize where we are with Joseph: Joseph was his father's favorite son. Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers because he was a punk. God worked through a variety of painful circumstances to make Joseph the second most powerful man in Egypt. Joseph's brothers are sent to Egypt to get food (because there is a famine) and Joseph recognizes them but they do not recognize him. Joseph tests them to see if they are repentant and today the big reveal: Joseph tells them who he really is.

## Aside: Typology

It would not be fair to modern theology to leave the story of Joseph without mentioning types. Many of you that grew up in church were taught that Joseph was a type of Christ. For those of you not familiar with types, listen to this definition from **Wikipedia: Typology . . . is a doctrine or theory concerning the relationship between the Old and New Testaments. Events in the Old Testament are seen as pre-figuring events or aspects of Christ in the New Testament.** If you were to go back, reread Joseph's story, and watch for parallels between Joseph's life and Jesus' life, you would see many examples of this. I chose not to mention typology in this series as it takes significant time and can get painfully complex.

## Preview: Move That Bus

Many of you know about my involvement in February in the Extreme Makeover: Home Edition. It was a week filled with opportunities to help a family. The TV show ends with, "MOVE THAT BUS!" When the bus is moved and families see their new homes for the first time, they are overcome with emotion, generally fall to their knees, and begin to weep. Everything is going to be all right now. They cannot begin to express how grateful they are to the community who made this happen.

That is what we see in today's text. There is a, "MOVE THAT BUS," moment right up front and the rest is the reaction. We left off last week with Joseph's brothers standing in front of him and Judah gave a speech about how they cannot go back to their father Jacob with news that he has lost another son.

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Genesis 45:1-46:7 (Author = Moses)

### Genesis 45

#### Joseph Revealed to His Brothers (immediately after Judah's speech)

**1 Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Make everyone go out from me!" So no one [of the Egyptians] stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers. 2 And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it.**

**3 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph; does my father still live?"** [This is a question that Joseph has asked them several times, showing his love for his father] **But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed** [disturbed, dismayed, terrified, anxious—lots of emotions bundled up in one word] **in his presence. 4 And Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near to me."** [Because they were standing a short distance away from him] **So they came near. Then he said: "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. 5 But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life** [WOW. Now that is **perspective**. I have been thinking about this statement for a few weeks and real forgiveness is forgiving those that have wronged you and seeing God's hand working in, through, and despite all things for good]. **6 For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. 7 And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity** [God promised Abram, Isaac, and Jacob that He would build up their family line and He has not done it yet—but He is going to do it in an unanticipated location: Egypt] **for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance** [literally, great escape—ironic words for what would happen next in

**Exodus]. 8 So now it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh** [i.e., I take care of everything for him (a term describing the chief minister of Egypt)], **and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.** [Question: Why was Joseph in Egypt? Was it because his brothers were evil or because God was good? **Yes**]

**9 “Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph: “God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not tarry. 10 You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near to me, you and your children, your children’s children, your flocks and your herds, and all that you have. 11 There I will provide for you, lest you and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty; for there are still five years of famine.””**

**12 “And behold, your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my mouth that speaks to you. 13 So you shall tell my father of all my glory** [glory, riches, abundance—do not necessarily interpret this as arrogance on the part of Joseph] **in Egypt, and of all that you have seen; and you shall hurry and bring my father down here.”**

**14 Then he fell on his brother Benjamin’s neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. 15 Moreover he kissed all his brothers** [forgiveness and reconciliation are stunningly beautiful] **and wept over them, and after that his brothers talked with him.**

**16 Now the report of it was heard in Pharaoh’s house, saying, “Joseph’s brothers have come.” So it pleased Pharaoh and his servants well** [because Pharaoh treasured Joseph]. **17 And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Say to your brothers, ‘Do this: Load your animals and depart; go to the land of Canaan. 18 Bring your father and your households and come to me; I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you will eat the fat of the land. 19 Now you are commanded—do this: Take carts out of the land of Egypt for your little ones and your wives; bring your father and come. 20 Also do not be concerned about your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.””**

**21 Then the sons of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them carts, according to the command of Pharaoh, and he gave them provisions for the journey. 22 He gave to all of them, to each man, changes of garments; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver** [30 pieces would buy you a slave, so this was **10** slaves’ worth of money—a large amount] **and five changes of garments. 23 And he sent to his father these things: ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and food for his father for the journey.** [Why so much? To make sure the 11 had enough for the journey back to Canaan and enough for the journey back to Egypt (for their entire family and all of their belongings); The trip home would take nearly two weeks and the trip back to Goshen would take closer to a week and a half] **24 So he sent his brothers away, and they departed; and he said to them, “See that you do not become troubled along the way.”**

**25 Then they went up out of Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to Jacob their father. 26 And they told him, saying, “Joseph is still alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt.” And Jacob’s heart stood still, because he did not believe them. 27 But when they told him all the words which Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts which Joseph had sent to carry him** [the carts and food and animals helped to convince Jacob that Joseph was alive], **the spirit of Jacob their father revived. 28**

**Then Israel** [We switched to Israel from Jacob. Typically, when the Old Testament uses, “Israel,” he is being more obedient and when the Old Testament uses, “Jacob,” he is being less obedient.] **said, “It is enough.** [Have you ever had a time in your life where you were totally overwhelmed with the goodness of God and you had to say, “It is enough”? **Boice: To return to Canaan with 'carts from Egypt' was the cultural equivalent of landing a jumbo jet among a tribe of isolated savages. It would be the stuff legends are made of.] Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.”**

## Genesis 46

### Jacob's Journey to Egypt

**1 So Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. 2 Then God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night, and said, “Jacob, Jacob!”**

**And he said, “Here I am.”**

**3 So He said, “I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. 4 I will go down with you to Egypt** [Jacob could have been internally wondering if this was really God's plan. So kind of God to assure Jacob that this was, in fact, God's plan.], **and I will also surely bring you up again** [this is prophecy concerning the future]; **and Joseph will put his hand on your eyes** [i.e., he will be the one to close your eyes when you **die**—a great way to go: with family].”

**5 Then Jacob arose from Beersheba; and the sons of Israel carried their father Jacob, their little ones, and their wives, in the carts which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. 6 So they took their livestock and their goods, which they had acquired in the land of Canaan, and went to Egypt, Jacob and all his descendants with him. 7 His sons and his sons' sons, his daughters and his sons' daughters, and all his descendants he brought with him to Egypt.** [Do you want to know the rest of the story? Joseph lived happily ever **after**. Really! If you want a summary of the story of Joseph, **Acts 7:9-16** is where Stephen preaches a great sermon that summarizes the entire Old Testament history of Israel in one chapter.]

### Epilogue

**David Guzik: The total number of males of this clan was 70: 66, plus Jacob himself, Joseph, and his two sons. . . . Like many great works of God, Israel had a slow beginning. From the time God called Abraham, it took at least 25 years to add one son, Isaac. It took Isaac 60 years to add another son of Israel, Jacob. It took 50 or 60 years for Jacob to have 12 sons. . . . But in 430 years, Israel will leave Egypt with 600,000 men. It took this family 215 years to grow from one to 70. In another 430 years, they grew to two million.** The moral of the math story? When God is ready, He is ready.

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. God is faithful to do what He said
2. Reconciliation is worth the effort
3. Forgiveness is **beautiful**

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Be faithful to what God has told you to do
2. Look for opportunities to reconcile with others and to help others reconcile
3. Forgive as often as possible and as **quickly** as possible

# The Essential 100

## A Bible overview plan for 2011-2012

The Essential 100 (E100) is a systematic approach that guides readers through the big picture of the Bible. It is a carefully selected list of short Bible passages—50 from the Old Testament and 50 from the New Testament. Each testament is broken up into ten, five-week series. We will move from Old to New Testaments every five weeks. My goal is to teach three of the five lessons in every series.

The E100 in Sunday school: We will REAP (read, explain, apply, and personalize) one passage each week and finish a series every five weeks. Each lesson will include a key verse for memorization. At the end of two years, we will have covered the essential 100 passages in the Bible.

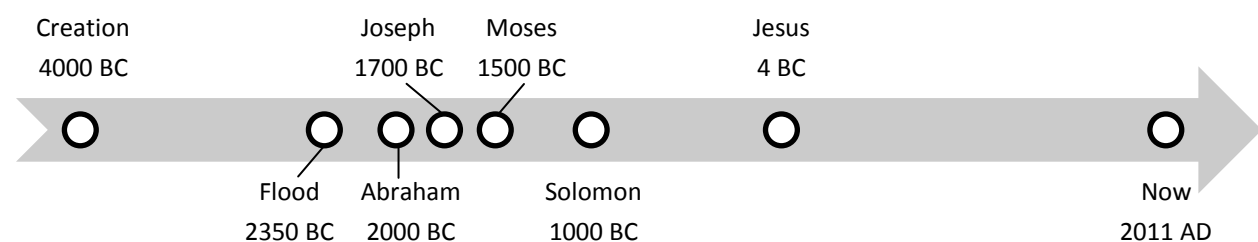
Additional information: To learn more about The E100 program and to obtain additional resources, visit [e100challenge.com](http://e100challenge.com). Our Sunday school website is [stuartheights.org/sundayschool](http://stuartheights.org/sundayschool).

## The Schedule: Moses and the Exodus

This is our fourth five-week series in the Old Testament. So far, we have looked at In the Beginning, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and The Story of Joseph. Now we shift out of **Genesis** and into **Exodus**.

Date	Lesson	Key Verse(s)	Passage	Speaker
August 7	Birth of Moses	Exodus 2:10	Exodus 1-2	Jim Fleming
August 14	The Burning Bush	Exodus 3:10	Exodus 3:1-4:17	Jim Fleming
August 21	The Ten Plagues	Exodus 11:9-10	Exodus 6:28-11:10	David Barber
August 28	Passover and Exodus	Exodus 12:12-13	Exodus 12:1-42	Terry Bolden & Jim Fleming
September 4	Crossing the Red Sea	Exodus 14:13-14	Exodus 13:17-14:31	Jim Fleming

Assuming a literal interpretation of Bible dates, the following timeline is close:



Moses was born ~ 1550 BC and lived 120 years. According to **Acts 7:23-29**, Moses is 40 when he leaves Egypt. **Acts 7:30** tells us that 40 more years will pass before God will speak to Moses in the burning bush—next week's lesson. Moses dies at age 120, so his life is divided up into three **forty**-year periods.

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Exodus 1-2 (Author = Moses)

### Exodus 1: Israel's Suffering in Egypt

**1** Now these *are* the names of the children of Israel who came to Egypt; each man and his household came with Jacob: **2** Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah; **3** Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin; **4** Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. **5** All those who were descendants of Jacob were seventy persons (for Joseph was in Egypt *already*). **6** And Joseph died, all his brothers, and all that generation. **7** But the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them.

**8** Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. **9** And he said to his people, “Look, the people of the children of Israel *are* more and mightier than we; **10** come, let us deal shrewdly [literally, wisely in order to **deceive**] with them, lest they multiply, and it happen, in the event of war, that they also join our enemies and fight against us, and so go up out of the land.” **11** Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict [**humble**, mishandle, afflict, humiliate, weaken] them with their burdens [forced labor, compulsory service]. And they built for Pharaoh supply cities, Pithom [pee-tome’; ironically, “The City of Justice”] and Raamses [ra-am’-sees]. **12** But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were in dread [a sickening dread] of the children of Israel. **13** So the Egyptians made the children of Israel serve with rigor [harshness, severity, cruelty]. **14** And they made their lives bitter [remember this word/concept because it will show up later in Israel’s story] with hard [hard, cruel, severe, obstinate, difficult, fierce, intense, vehement, stubborn] bondage—in mortar [cement], in brick [brick/tile], and in all manner of service in the field. All their service in which they made them serve *was* with rigor.

**15** Then the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of one was Shiphrah [schiff-ra’; **fair**] and the name of the other Puah [pooh-ah’; **splendid**]; **16** and he said, “When you do the duties of a midwife for the Hebrew women, and see *them* on the birthstools [strangely enough, this is the exact same word for potter’s wheel], if it *is* a son, then you shall kill him; but if it *is* a daughter, then she shall live.” **17** But the midwives feared God [the first mention of Israelites in Egypt that were impacted by their relationship with God], and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the male children alive [Principle: Obey the state until the state violates God’s laws—and there your obedience to the state **ends**]. **18** So the king of Egypt called for the midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this thing, and saved the male children alive?”

**19** And the midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women *are* not like the Egyptian women; for they *are* lively [vigorous, lively] and give birth before the midwives come to them.”

**20** Therefore God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied and grew very mighty. **21** And so it was, because the midwives feared God, that He provided households for them [David Guzik: He enabled them to have children of their own. Usually, midwives were midwives because they had no children of their own.]. [Never underestimate the impact of godly **women** (because if they had done what the king of Egypt told them to do, Moses would have been killed and we would have, “The Five Books of Somebody Else”]

**22 So Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, “Every son who is born you shall cast into the river, and every daughter you shall save alive.”** [Does this passage remind you of any other passage in the Bible? It reminds me of the New Testament passages that talk about the Caesar’s attempts to kill Jesus by killing babies. In both accounts, God sends a deliverer and Satan puts on a full-court press.]

### Exodus 2: Moses Is Born

**1 And a man of the house of Levi went and took as wife a daughter of Levi** [this does not mean they were brother and sister—this means they were of the same tribe]. **2 So the woman conceived and bore a son. And when she saw that he was a beautiful child, she hid him three months.** **3 But when she could no longer hide him, she took an ark [basket] of bulrushes [rush, reed, papyrus] for him, daubed [boiled] it with asphalt and pitch [tar, pitch, and asphalt], put the child in it, and laid it in the reeds by the river’s bank** [literally speaking, this mother does exactly as the king wished—except she insured her son’s protection]. **4 And his sister [Miriam] stood afar off, to know what would be done to him.**

**5 Then the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river. And her maidens walked along the riverside; and when she saw the ark among the reeds, she sent her maid to get it.** **6 And when she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby wept** [What does Moses do the first time we meet him? **Cries** (remember this as it will not be the last time he cries)]. **So she had compassion [sparing pity, compassion] on him, and said, “This is one of the Hebrews’ children.”**

**7 Then his sister said to Pharaoh’s daughter, “Shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for you?”** [What a beautifully timed word!]

**8 And Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Go.” So the maiden went and called the child’s mother.** **9 Then Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages.” So the woman took the child and nursed him.** [Moses’ mom is paid to take care of him—do not tell me that God cannot fix your issues] **10 And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter, and he became her son. So she called his name Moses [drawn]—one of the most appropriate names in all of the Bible as God draws Moses out of Egypt to train him, God uses Moses to draw the children of Israel out of Egypt, and God uses Moses to draw the letters of the Pentateuch for all of us], saying, “Because I drew him out of the water.”** [What we do not hear about in **Exodus** is Moses’ childhood. **Acts 7:22** tells us about that: **And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds. David Guzik: Egypt was one of the most academic and scientific societies on the earth at that time; Moses would have been instructed in geography, history, grammar and writing, literature, philosophy, music.**]

### Moses Flees to Midian

**11 Now it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian beating [can mean anything from striking to in the process of **killing**] a Hebrew, one of his brethren.** **12 So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed [same word used in **Exodus 2:11** for what the Egyptian was doing to the Hebrew] the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.** [Again, **Acts 7** sheds light on this and shows that Moses was



**justified** in what he did] **13 And when he went out the second day, behold, two Hebrew men were fighting, and he said to the one who did the wrong, “Why are you striking your companion?”**

**14 Then he said, “Who made you a prince and a judge over us? [Actually, Pharaoh] Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?” So Moses feared and said, “Surely this thing is known!” 15 When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh [John Wesley: Things were not yet ripe for *Israel’s* deliverance. The measure of *Egypt’s* iniquity was not yet full; the *Hebrews* were not sufficiently humbled, nor were they yet *increased* to such a multitude as God designed: *Moses* is to be farther fitted for the service, and therefore is directed to withdraw for the present. The Egyptians were not bad enough, the Israelites were not big enough, and Moses was not bold enough for God to deliver] and dwelt in the land of Midian [strife]; and he sat down by a well.**

**16 Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters. And they came and drew water, and they filled the troughs to water their father’s flock. 17 Then the shepherds came and drove them away; but Moses stood up and helped [saved, delivered (not, ‘helped’)] them, and watered their flock.**

**18 When they came to Reuel [friend of God; Reuel was Jethro’s father (see [Numbers 10:29](#))] their father, he said, “How *is it that* you have come so soon today?” 19 And they said, “An Egyptian [he looked and talked like an Egyptian] delivered us [took us away from, snatched us away from, rescued us, recovered us, delivered us] from the hand of the shepherds, and he also drew enough water for us and watered the flock.” 20 So he said to his daughters, “And where *is* he? Why *is it that* you have left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread.”**

**21 Then Moses was content to live with the man, and he gave Zipporah [bird] his daughter to Moses. 22 And she bore *him* a son. He called his name Gershom [geh-resh-home’; foreigner], for he said, “I have been a stranger in a foreign land.” [David Guzik: We make a mistake when we think that the years in Midian were a “waiting” time for Moses. They were instead, **working** years; he had never worked this hard in his life! God was training him, shaping him for his future calling, but Moses was certainly not “on the shelf.”]**

**23 Now it happened in the process of time that the king of Egypt died. Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to God because of the bondage. 24 So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. 25 And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged *them*.** [God had not forgotten them, but He was waiting for the Israelites to remember Him]

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. The **Bible** can be easily misunderstood
2. Seemingly inconsequential people can have tremendous impacts
3. God is aware and is **always** working

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Compare line upon line **every** time
2. Take the time to study the lesser-known characters’ stories in Scripture
3. Never give up on God (or His timing)



# Moses and the Exodus: The Burning Bush

---

## Preview: Here am I LORD, Send Aaron!

Moses is living as a shepherd in the desert when God called Moses to deliver His people from slavery in Egypt. Moses objects—multiple times. God overcomes all of Moses' objections and also uses Aaron.

Key Thought: Will you be a Moses or an Aaron?

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Exodus 3:1-4:17 (Author = Moses)

### Exodus 3: Moses at the Burning Bush

**1 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law** [Moses is now **80** and does not own the sheep], **the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb** [also known as Mount Sinai], **the mountain of God. 2 And the Angel of the LORD** [if you study angels in the Scriptures, you will most likely conclude that, 'the Angel of the LORD' is the **pre**-incarnate Jesus Christ] **appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush** [literally, a thorny bush]. **So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. 3 Then Moses said** [talking to himself], **"I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn."** [David Guzik: **You have a thorn-bush . . . a figure of the curse . . . being burned (a picture of judgment) without being consumed (a picture of God's mercy and grace)**] [The Angel of the LORD may have stayed the entire time and been the mouthpiece for God. The Angel of the LORD may have just showed up to get Moses' attention. The Angel of the LORD may have stayed during this entire exchange. The text does not say.]

**4 So when the LORD** [Jehovah; the existing One; Yod-Heh-Vav-Heh; the unutterable, ineffable name for God (we get Yahweh and Jehovah from this name)] **saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!"** [Again with the repeated name]

**And he said, "Here I am."**

**5 Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground."** [God is making a point that wherever I am is holy ground and it should be treated differently (I personally think that God is mentally preparing Moses for what comes next)] **6 Moreover He said, "I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.**

**7 And the LORD said: "I have surely seen the oppression** [affliction, poverty, misery] **of My people** [for many years the children of Israel had forgotten who their God was, but God had not forgotten who His people were] **who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows** [pain, sorrow; **God knows their sorrows?** Really? Yes—man rejected Him in the garden and had let Him down countless times so far in the Old Testament].

**8 So I have come down** [in a visible form] **to deliver** [deliver, rescue, snatch] **them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing**



[flowing, gushing] **with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites** [people who lived in western Canaan] **and the Hittites** [people who lived in southern Canaan] **and the Amorites** [people who lived in eastern Canaan] **and the Perizzites** [people who lived in southwestern Canaan] **and the Hivites** [people who lived in northern Canaan] **and the Jebusites** [people who lived in central Canaan—God just **mapped** out the Israelites' future home]. **9 Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression** [oppression, distress, pressure] **with which the Egyptians oppress** [squeeze, press, oppress] **them. 10 Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring** [bring, lead, deliver] **My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."**

**What did Pharaoh want to do to Moses the last time we read about Pharaoh?** To **kill** Moses

**11 But Moses said to God, "Who *am* I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?"** [First objection: Who am **I**?]

**12 So He [God] said, "I will certainly be with you. And this *shall be* a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."**

**13 Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, *when* I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?"** [Second objection: Who are **you**?]

**14 And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM."** [Literally, "I be who I be"—the focus of the word is on the existence of the action, not the action] **And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" 15 Moreover God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.'** **16 Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared to me, saying, "I have surely visited you and *seen* what is done to you in Egypt; 17 and I have said I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey.'" [And in **Exodus 3:18-22**, God tells Moses the rest of the story**

of the Exodus] **18 Then they will heed your voice** [remember this]; **and you shall come, you and the elders of Israel, to the king of Egypt; and you shall say to him, ‘The LORD God of the Hebrews has met with us; and now, please, let us go three days’ journey into the wilderness** [to get far enough away from Egypt to be able to worship freely], **that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.’** **19 But I am sure** [I know] **that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not even by a mighty hand.** **20 So I will stretch out My hand and strike** [to smite, strike, beat, scourge, kill, attack, destroy, conquer, ravage, chastise, send judgment upon, punish] **Egypt with all My wonders** [literally, beyond your **power** to understand or do (the ten plagues)] **which I will do in its midst; and after that he will let you go.** **21 And I will give this people favor** [favor, grace, charm, elegance, acceptance] **in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be, when you go, that you shall not go empty-handed.** **22 But every woman shall ask of her neighbor, namely, of her who dwells near her house, articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing; and you shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder** [strip these things off of] **the Egyptians.”** [God’s plan is very clear: **Moses** should lead the children of Israel out of Egypt. That sounds like a great plan! However, Moses is still not convinced.]

#### Exodus 4: Miraculous Signs for Pharaoh

**1 Then Moses answered and said, “But suppose they will not believe** [support, confirm, be faithful] **me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, ‘The LORD has not appeared to you.’”** [Third objection: What if they do not **believe**? The problem is that God has already told Moses they would believe]

**2 So the LORD said to him, “What is that in your hand?”**

**He** [Moses] **said, “A rod** [rod, staff, branch].” [David Guzik: That rod of Moses would part the Red Sea; it would strike a rock and see water pour forth; it would be raised over battle until Israel was victorious; it would be called the rod of God (Exodus 4:20; 17:9)]

**3 And He** [God] **said, “Cast it on the ground.” So he** [Moses] **cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent** [The first sign was a serpent; not, ‘like a serpent,’ or, ‘in the form of a serpent,’ but an actual serpent]; **and Moses fled from it** [Moses is fully content to talk barefooted to a burning bush about delivering a few million people, but he runs away from a snake]. **4 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Reach out your hand and take it by the tail” (and he reached out his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand** [the tail is the most dangerous place on a snake to grab—but God was giving Moses opportunities to trust Him]), **5 “that they may believe** [support, confirm, be faithful] **that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.”** [The sign of the serpent showed God could defeat the enemies of Moses]

**6 Furthermore the LORD said to him, “Now put your hand in your bosom.” And he put his hand in his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous, like snow.** **7 And He said, “Put your hand in your bosom again.” So he put his hand in his bosom again, and drew it out of his bosom, and behold, it was restored like his other flesh.** [The sign of the leprosy showed that God could purify the polluted] **8 “Then it will be, if they do not believe you, nor heed the message of the first sign, that they may believe the message of the latter sign** [This sounds a lot like the words that Abraham used in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus]. **9 And it shall be, if they do not believe even these two signs, or**

**listen to your voice, that you shall take water from the river and pour it on the dry land. The water which you take from the river will become blood on the dry land."** [The third sign was blood; **Why three signs?** Moses needed much convincing (as is evidenced in the next verse)]

**10 Then Moses said to the LORD, "O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow** [heavy, hard, difficult, burdensome] **of speech and slow** [heavy, hard, difficult, burdensome] **of tongue."** [Fourth objection: I am a poor **speaker**]

**11 So the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the LORD?"** [This sounds much like the conversation that God had with Job where God asked Job a series of rhetorical questions] **12 Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach** [point, direct, teach, instruct] **you what you shall say."**

**13 But he said, "O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever else You may send."** [Fifth objection: I do not **want** to do it]

**14 So the anger** [nostril] **of the LORD was kindled against Moses** [God only got mad when Moses showed unwillingness], **and He said: "Is not Aaron** [light bringer] **the Levite** [joined to] **your brother?** [God had put someone next to Moses who would bring the light because Moses refused to do it] **I know that he can speak well. And look, he is also coming out to meet you. When he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. 15 Now you shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth. And I will be with your mouth and with his mouth** [God would be with Aaron's mouth as well—so kind of God to reward the man who was willing to do the work], **and I will teach you what you shall do. 16 So he shall be your spokesman to the people. And he himself shall be as a mouth for you, and you shall be to him as God.** [When we see Moses speaking to the people in the rest of the Bible, it is really Aaron. Moses missed opportunities to share directly with the people. I wonder what Aaron was supposed to do that he could not do because he performed Moses' **ministry**. Truth be told, Aaron was a thorn in Moses' side (**David Guzik: Aaron instigated the worship of the golden calf, fashioning the calf himself and building the altar himself (Exodus 32:1-6), his sons blasphemed God with impure offerings (Leviticus 10:1-7), and he openly led a mutiny against Moses (Numbers 12:1-8).**)] **17 And you shall take this rod in your hand, with which you shall do the signs."** [God's original plan was for Moses to do the work, but He also used Aaron because of Moses' objections.]

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. God will talk to me in unexpected places
2. God wants to use **me** to do what He has called **me** to do (God is my sufficiency)
3. God will sometimes use someone **else** if I refuse to do what He has called me to do

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Always be ready to listen to God and respond to His call
2. Serve Him where He calls (and if he is not calling right now, Darrell probably is)
3. Serve with a **glad** heart when someone else abdicates their service

# Moses and the Exodus: The Ten Plagues

---

## Review

### Being Pried out of Egypt

**Exodus 3:7-8 (MSG):** GOD said, "I've taken a good, long look at the affliction of my people in Egypt. I've heard their cries for deliverance from their slave masters; I know all about their pain. And now I have come down to help them, pry them loose from the grip of Egypt, get them out of that country and bring them to a good land with wide-open spaces, a land lush with milk and honey, the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite."

### The Context

*Date: ~1400 B.C.*

- Lived in Egypt for 430 years
- After things like the flood, Tower of Babel
- Before the prophets, King David, etc.

### *Before the law of Moses*

- Worship of God was once understood as Noah built altar
- Jacob worshiped and Isaac was almost sacrificed
- Four generations from Jacob to Moses and no mention of sacrifice

*70 people enter Egypt and now, nearly 2.5 million leave as a nation is born*

### *The Timeline*

- Joseph takes them into Egypt to save the family
- There a Pharaoh rises that did not know Joseph, resulting in slavery
- God prepares Moses
- The plagues loosen the grip Pharaoh has on the Israelites
- Exodus from Egypt including parting of the Red Sea
- Giving of the Law (while Israel still rejects God)
- Israel wanders 40 years
- Israel enters the promise land

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Exodus 6:28-11:11 (Author = Moses)

### Exodus 6: Moses Abdicates

**28** And it came to pass, on the day the LORD spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt, **29** that the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "I *am* the LORD. Speak to Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say to you."

**30** But Moses said before the LORD, "Behold, I *am* of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh heed me?"

## Exodus 7

**1** So the LORD said to Moses: "See, I have made you *as* God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet. **2** You shall speak all that I command you. And Aaron your brother shall tell Pharaoh to send the children of Israel out of his land. **3** And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. **4** But Pharaoh will not heed you, so that I may lay My hand on Egypt and bring My armies *and* My people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. **5** And the Egyptians shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the children of Israel from among them."

**6** Then Moses and Aaron did so; just as the LORD commanded them, so they did. **7** And Moses *was* eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three years old when they spoke to Pharaoh.

## Aaron's Miraculous Rod

**8** Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, **9** "When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, 'Show a miracle for yourselves,' then you shall say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and cast *it* before Pharaoh, *and* let it become a serpent.'" **10** So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh, and they did so, just as the LORD commanded. And Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a serpent.

**11** But Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers; so the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. **12** For every man threw down his rod, and they became serpents. But Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. **13** And Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as the LORD had said.

## The First Plague: Waters Become Blood

**14** So the LORD said to Moses: "Pharaoh's heart *is* hard; he refuses to let the people go. **15** Go to Pharaoh in the morning, when he goes out to the water, and you shall stand by the river's bank to meet him; and the rod which was turned to a serpent you shall take in your hand. **16** And you shall say to him, 'The LORD God of the Hebrews has sent me to you, saying, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness"; but indeed, until now you would not hear! **17** Thus says the LORD: "By this you shall know that I *am* the LORD. Behold, I will strike the waters which *are* in the river with the rod that *is* in my hand, and they shall be turned to blood. **18** And the fish that *are* in the river shall die, the river shall stink, and the Egyptians will loathe to drink the water of the river.'""

**19** Then the LORD spoke to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their streams, over their rivers, over their ponds, and over all their pools of water, that they may become blood. And there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in *buckets of wood and pitchers of stone.*'" **20** And Moses and Aaron did so, just as the LORD commanded. So he lifted up the rod and struck the waters that *were* in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants. And all the waters that *were* in the river were turned to blood. **21** The fish that *were* in the river died, the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink the water of the river. So there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.



**22** Then the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments; and Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as the LORD had said. **23** And Pharaoh turned and went into his house. Neither was his heart moved by this. **24** So all the Egyptians dug all around the river for water to drink, because they could not drink the water of the river. **25** And seven days passed after the LORD had struck the river.

### Exodus 8: The Second Plague: Frogs

**1** And the LORD spoke to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. **2** But if you refuse to let *them* go, behold, I will smite all your territory with frogs. **3** So the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into your house, into your bedroom, on your bed, into the houses of your servants, on your people, into your ovens, and into your kneading bowls. **4** And the frogs shall come up on you, on your people, and on all your servants.'"

**5** Then the LORD spoke to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your hand with your rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up on the land of Egypt.'" **6** So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. **7** And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs on the land of Egypt.

**8** Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, "Entreat the LORD that He may take away the frogs from me and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may sacrifice to the LORD."

**9** And Moses said to Pharaoh, "Accept the honor of saying when I shall intercede for you, for your servants, and for your people, to destroy the frogs from you and your houses, *that* they may remain in the river only."

**10** So he said, "Tomorrow." And he said, "*Let it be* according to your word, that you may know that *there is* no one like the LORD our God. **11** And the frogs shall depart from you, from your houses, from your servants, and from your people. They shall remain in the river only."

**12** Then Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh. And Moses cried out to the LORD concerning the frogs which He had brought against Pharaoh. **13** So the LORD did according to the word of Moses. And the frogs died out of the houses, out of the courtyards, and out of the fields. **14** They gathered them together in heaps, and the land stank. **15** But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and did not heed them, as the LORD had said.

### The Third Plague: Lice

**16** So the LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your rod, and strike the dust of the land, so that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt.'" **17** And they did so. For Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod and struck the dust of the earth, and it became lice on man and beast. All the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt.

**18** Now the magicians so worked with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not. So there were lice on man and beast. **19** Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, just as the LORD had said.

### The Fourth Plague: Flies

**20** And the LORD said to Moses, "Rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh as he comes out to the water. Then say to him, 'Thus says the LORD: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. **21** Or else, if you will not let My people go, behold, I will send swarms of *flies* on you and your servants, on your people and into your houses. The houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms of *flies*, and also the ground on which they *stand*. **22** And in that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms of *flies* shall be there, in order that you may know that I *am* the LORD in the midst of the land. **23** I will make a difference between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall be.'"" **24** And the LORD did so. Thick swarms of *flies* came into the house of Pharaoh, *into* his servants' houses, and into all the land of Egypt. The land was corrupted because of the swarms of *flies*.

**25** Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, "Go, sacrifice to your God in the land."

**26** And Moses said, "It is not right to do so, for we would be sacrificing the abomination of the Egyptians to the LORD our God. If we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, then will they not stone us? **27** We will go three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the LORD our God as He will command us."

**28** So Pharaoh said, "I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away. Intercede for me."

**29** Then Moses said, "Indeed I am going out from you, and I will entreat the LORD, that the swarms of *flies* may depart tomorrow from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people. But let Pharaoh not deal deceitfully anymore in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the LORD."

**30** So Moses went out from Pharaoh and entreated the LORD. **31** And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; He removed the swarms of *flies* from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people. Not one remained. **32** But Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also; neither would he let the people go.

## Exodus 9

### The Fifth Plague: Livestock Diseased

**1** Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh and tell him, 'Thus says the LORD God of the Hebrews: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. **2** For if you refuse to let *them* go, and still hold them, **3** behold, the hand of the LORD will be on your cattle in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the oxen, and on the sheep—a very severe pestilence. **4** And the LORD will make a difference between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt. So nothing shall die of all *that* belongs to the children of Israel.'"" **5** Then the LORD appointed a set time, saying, "Tomorrow the LORD will do this thing in the land."



**6** So the LORD did this thing on the next day, and all the livestock of Egypt died; but of the livestock of the children of Israel, not one died. **7** Then Pharaoh sent, and indeed, not even one of the livestock of the Israelites was dead. But the heart of Pharaoh became hard, and he did not let the people go.

### The Sixth Plague: Boils

**8** So the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Take for yourselves handfuls of ashes from a furnace, and let Moses scatter it toward the heavens in the sight of Pharaoh. **9** And it will become fine dust in all the land of Egypt, and it will cause boils that break out in sores on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt." **10** Then they took ashes from the furnace and stood before Pharaoh, and Moses scattered *them* toward heaven. And *they* caused boils that break out in sores on man and beast. **11** And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils were on the magicians and on all the Egyptians. **12** But the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh; and he did not heed them, just as the LORD had spoken to Moses.

### The Seventh Plague: Hail

**13** Then the LORD said to Moses, "Rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh, and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD God of the Hebrews: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me, **14** for at this time I will send all My plagues to your very heart, and on your servants and on your people, that you may know that *there is* none like Me in all the earth. **15** Now if I had stretched out My hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, then you would have been cut off from the earth. **16** But indeed for this *purpose* I have raised you up, that I may show My power *in* you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth. **17** As yet you exalt yourself against My people in that you will not let them go. **18** Behold, tomorrow about this time I will cause very heavy hail to rain down, such as has not been in Egypt since its founding until now. **19** Therefore send now *and* gather your livestock and all that you have in the field, for the hail shall come down on every man and every animal which is found in the field and is not brought home; and they shall die.'"

**20** He who feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his livestock flee to the houses. **21** But he who did not regard the word of the LORD left his servants and his livestock in the field.

**22** Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt—on man, on beast, and on every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt." **23** And Moses stretched out his rod toward heaven; and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire darted to the ground. And the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt. **24** So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, so very heavy that there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. **25** And the hail struck throughout the whole land of Egypt, all that *was* in the field, both man and beast; and the hail struck every herb of the field and broke every tree of the field. **26** Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel *were*, there was no hail.

**27** And Pharaoh sent and called for Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "I have sinned this time. The LORD *is* righteous, and my people and I *are* wicked. **28** Entreat the LORD, that there may be no *more* mighty thundering and hail, for *it is* enough. I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer."

**29** So Moses said to him, "As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will spread out my hands to the LORD; the thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, that you may know that the earth *is* the LORD's. **30** But as for you and your servants, I know that you will not yet fear the LORD God."

**31** Now the flax and the barley were struck, for the barley *was* in the head and the flax *was* in bud. **32** But the wheat and the spelt were not struck, for they *are* late crops.

**33** So Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh and spread out his hands to the LORD; then the thunder and the hail ceased, and the rain was not poured on the earth. **34** And when Pharaoh saw that the rain, the hail, and the thunder had ceased, he sinned yet more; and he hardened his heart, he and his servants. **35** So the heart of Pharaoh was hard; neither would he let the children of Israel go, as the LORD had spoken by Moses.

## Exodus 10

### The Eighth Plague: Locusts

**1** Now the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh; for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his servants, that I may show these signs of Mine before him, **2** and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and your son's son the mighty things I have done in Egypt, and My signs which I have done among them, that you may know that I *am* the LORD."

**3** So Moses and Aaron came in to Pharaoh and said to him, "Thus says the LORD God of the Hebrews: 'How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let My people go, that they may serve Me. **4** Or else, if you refuse to let My people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your territory. **5** And they shall cover the face of the earth, so that no one will be able to see the earth; and they shall eat the residue of what is left, which remains to you from the hail, and they shall eat every tree which grows up for you out of the field. **6** They shall fill your houses, the houses of all your servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians—which neither your fathers nor your fathers' fathers have seen, since the day that they were on the earth to this day.'" And he turned and went out from Pharaoh.

**7** Then Pharaoh's servants said to him, "How long shall this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God. Do you not yet know that Egypt is destroyed?"

**8** So Moses and Aaron were brought again to Pharaoh, and he said to them, "Go, serve the LORD your God. Who *are* the ones that are going?"

**9** And Moses said, "We will go with our young and our old; with our sons and our daughters, with our flocks and our herds we will go, for we must hold a feast to the LORD."

**10** Then he said to them, "The LORD had better be with you when I let you and your little ones go! Beware, for evil is ahead of you. **11** Not so! Go now, you *who are* men, and serve the LORD, for that is what you desired." And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.

**12** Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land—all that the hail has left." **13**

So Moses stretched out his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind on the land all that day and all *that* night. When it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. **14** And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt and rested on all the territory of Egypt. *They were* very severe; previously there had been no such locusts as they, nor shall there be such after them. **15** For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they ate every herb of the land and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left. So there remained nothing green on the trees or on the plants of the field throughout all the land of Egypt.

**16** Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste, and said, "I have sinned against the LORD your God and against you. **17** Now therefore, please forgive my sin only this once, and entreat the LORD your God, that He may take away from me this death only." **18** So he went out from Pharaoh and entreated the LORD. **19** And the LORD turned a very strong west wind, which took the locusts away and blew them into the Red Sea. There remained not one locust in all the territory of Egypt. **20** But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the children of Israel go.

### The Ninth Plague: Darkness

**21** Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness *which* may even be felt." **22** So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. **23** They did not see one another; nor did anyone rise from his place for three days. But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

**24** Then Pharaoh called to Moses and said, "Go, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be kept back. Let your little ones also go with you."

**25** But Moses said, "You must also give us sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God. **26** Our livestock also shall go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind. For we must take some of them to serve the LORD our God, and even we do not know with what we must serve the LORD until we arrive there."

**27** But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go. **28** Then Pharaoh said to him, "Get away from me! Take heed to yourself and see my face no more! For in the day you see my face you shall die!"

**29** So Moses said, "You have spoken well. I will never see your face again."

## Exodus 11

### Death of the Firstborn Announced

**1** And the LORD said to Moses, "I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt. Afterward he will let you go from here. When he lets you go, he will surely drive you out of here altogether. **2** Speak now in the hearing of the people, and let every man ask from his neighbor and every woman from her neighbor, articles of silver and articles of gold." **3** And the LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants and in the sight of the people.

**4** Then Moses said, “Thus says the LORD: ‘About midnight I will go out into the midst of Egypt; **5** and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the female servant who is behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the animals. **6** Then there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as was not like it before, nor shall be like it again. **7** But against none of the children of Israel shall a dog move its tongue, against man or beast, that you may know that the LORD does make a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.’ **8** And all these your servants shall come down to me and bow down to me, saying, ‘Get out, and all the people who follow you!’ After that I will go out.” Then he went out from Pharaoh in great anger.

**9** But the LORD said to Moses, “Pharaoh will not heed you, so that My wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt.” **10** So Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh; and the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he did not let the children of Israel go out of his land.

### Moses: An unwilling vessel

#### *God used Moses despite him*

- Murderer, wanderer, worker for his father-in-law
- Ran from his destiny for many years
- Was he really slow of speech? He became a strong speaker later when he delivers the 10 commandments.

#### *God could have moved right past him*

#### *God treats Moses like a Father would a child*

### The Plagues

- Blood ([Exodus 7:14-25](#))
- Frogs ([Exodus 7:26-8:11](#))
- Lice ([Exodus 8:12-15](#))
- Dog Flies ([Exodus 8:16-28](#))
- Murrain ([Exodus 9:1-7](#))
- Boils ([Exodus 9:8-12](#))
- Hail Storm ([Exodus 9:13-35](#))
- Locusts ([Exodus 10:1-20](#))
- Darkness ([Exodus 10:21-29](#))
- Death of the Firstborn Son ([Exodus 11:1-12:36](#))

### Apply (What is the point?) & Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Moses was used in spite of himself
  - Abdicates his role as mouthpiece of God
  - God uses him in mighty ways
  - Used but never enters the Promised Land

## 2. Meaning of the plagues

- Egypt's perspective: compared to Egypt's gods
- Pharaoh's perspective: common magic and a hard heart
- Moses' perspective: God uses weak vessels
- Israel's perspective: God's judgment on Egypt

## 3. God's perspective: A Father

God's lesson for Israel: I am your Father

- God used Moses despite him
- God lets His nation make mistakes growing up
- The nation sees God's power and still rejects Him, resulting in wilderness wandering
- God is faithful, even when we are not (Moses, Israel)

## 4. How is your relationship with your Heavenly Father?

- Are you doing what God has asked of you?
- How do you see your mistakes growing up?
- When you see God's power, do you still reject Him?
- God is faithful, even when we are not.

## 5. The Message

- **Romans 9:14-18 (NIV): 14 What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! 15 For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." 16 It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God's mercy. 17 For Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." 18 Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.**
- Why the 10 Plagues?

Judgment on specific gods associated with the Nile. God proclaims that all the gods of Egypt will be judged through the tenth and final plague (**Exodus 12:12**).

**Wikipedia: The first three plagues seemed to affect "all the land of Egypt," while the 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 9th did not affect the children of Israel. Conditions of the 8th plague are unclear. For the last plague the Torah indicates that they were only spared from the final plague by sacrificing the Paschal lamb.**

Plagues were more for Israel than Pharaoh (**Exodus 11:10**)

# Moses and the Exodus: Passover and Exodus

---

## Review

In this series, we are looking at the life of Moses (the deliverer of Israel from the slavery of Egypt). Here is a quick recap:

- Jacob and his descendants have greatly multiplied in Egypt ([Exodus 1:7-14](#))
- They become slaves and God knows of their suffering ([Exodus 2:23-25](#))
- Moses comes on the scene and God calls him from the burning bush ([Exodus 3](#))
- Moses approaches Pharaoh with God's message ([Exodus 5:1a: Let My people go](#))
- Despite many plagues and miracles from God, Pharaoh refuses until the final plague—the death of the firstborn of all of Egypt

## Preview: It's all about Jesus. It's only about Jesus. It's always about Jesus.

Today's lesson is all about the directions that God gave to the Israelites to survive the final plague. Those directions were passed down and are still practiced today—in the form of the Jewish Passover Seder.

Key Thought: The Passover is all about **Jesus**

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Exodus 12:1-42 (Author = Moses)

### The Passover Instituted

**1** Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, **2** "This month *shall be* your beginning of months; it *shall be* the first month of the year to you. **3** Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of *his* father, a lamb for a household. **4** And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take *it* according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb. **5** Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take *it* from the sheep or from the goats. **6** Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. **7** And they shall take *some* of the blood and put *it* on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. **8** Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread *and* with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it. **9** Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire—its head with its legs and its entrails. **10** You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire. **11** And thus you shall eat it: *with* a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. *It is* the LORD's Passover.

**12** 'For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I *am* the LORD. **13** Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you *are*. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy *you* when I strike the land of Egypt.

**14** ‘So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance. **15** Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. **16** On the first day *there shall be* a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but *that* which everyone must eat—that only may be prepared by you. **17** So you shall observe *the Feast of Unleavened Bread*, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance. **18** In the first *month*, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. **19** For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, since whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether *he is* a stranger or a native of the land. **20** You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.’”

**21** Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Pick out and take lambs for yourselves according to your families, and kill the Passover *lamb*. **22** And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip *it* in the blood that *is* in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that *is* in the basin. And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning. **23** For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike *you*. **24** And you shall observe this thing as an ordinance for you and your sons forever. **25** It will come to pass when you come to the land which the LORD will give you, just as He promised, that you shall keep this service. **26** And it shall be, when your children say to you, ‘What do you mean by this service?’ **27** that you shall say, ‘It *is* the Passover sacrifice of the LORD, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households.’” So the people bowed their heads and worshiped. **28** Then the children of Israel went away and did *so*; just as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

### The Tenth Plague: Death of the Firstborn

**29** And it came to pass at midnight that the LORD struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who *was* in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of livestock. **30** So Pharaoh rose in the night, he, all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for *there was* not a house where *there was* not one dead.

### The Exodus

**31** Then he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, “Rise, go out from among my people, both you and the children of Israel. And go, serve the LORD as you have said. **32** Also take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone; and bless me also.”

**33** And the Egyptians urged the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste. For they said, “*We shall all be dead*.” **34** So the people took their dough before it was leavened, having their

kneading bowls bound up in their clothes on their shoulders. **35** Now the children of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, and they had asked from the Egyptians articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing. **36** And the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they granted them *what they requested*. Thus they plundered the Egyptians.

**37** Then the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children. **38** A mixed multitude went up with them also, and flocks and herds—a great deal of livestock. **39** And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they had brought out of Egypt; for it was not leavened, because they were driven out of Egypt and could not wait, nor had they prepared provisions for themselves.

**40** Now the sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in Egypt *was* four hundred and thirty years. **41** And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years—on that very same day—it came to pass that all the armies of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. **42** It is a night of solemn observance to the LORD for bringing them out of the land of Egypt. This *is* that night of the LORD, a solemn observance for all the children of Israel throughout their generations.

I. Passover in Egypt ([Exodus 12:3-51](#))

A. There were three basic elements to the original Passover: ([Exodus 12:3-14](#))

1. A **lamb** (without blemish—perfect, chosen on the tenth of Nissan, slain on the fourteenth, roasted whole, not a bone could be broken)
2. Unleavened bread (eaten in haste, loins girded, shoes on, staff in hand, ready for their coming journey)
3. Bitter **herbs** (eaten together with the bread and the lamb)

B. There were three specific instructions outside of the meal:

1. Each household was to take hyssop, dip it in blood, and strike the side posts and upper doorpost of the house wherein they were eating the Passover ([Exodus 12:7, 22-23](#))
2. Continue to practice this Feast of Remembrance forever ([Exodus 12:7, 24](#))
3. The Israelites were to wait for their deliverance ([Exodus 12:22-23, 30-31](#)). They were to wait for the LORD to, “**pass over**,” them, because they were covered, “**by the blood**,” on the doorposts. Then He would deliver them, “**through the blood**.”

II. Passover at the time of Christ

Throughout the time of the temple, the Passover observances became more elaborate, symbolic, and ceremonious. Passover was one of three pilgrimage feasts along with Pentecost (Feast of Weeks) and Sukkoth (Feast of Tabernacles.) Josephus estimated that the Passover multitude in and about Jerusalem in AD 66 was around 2.5 million. During this time, the meal was eaten in a more



leisurely fashion (no need for imminent travel), often reclining but with solemn prayers and recitations. Several elements were added to the ceremonial feast such as haroset (a ground fruit and nut mixture) as well as the “fruit of the vine” (which was always unfermented).

However, the centerpiece of the Passover was still the Paschal Lamb. At the time of Christ, it has been estimated that up to 250,000 lambs would be slain beginning just after noon on Passover Day in Jerusalem.

### III. Passover today

There are many similarities of the Passover today with ancient times, but one huge exception is evident. No longer is the Passover **lamb** the central figure of the holiday!

#### A. Today, there are seven basic elements:

1. A shank **bone** of a lamb is suggested
2. The unleavened bread is still present and has become the central and most important element of Passover today
3. Bitter herbs
4. A bowl of **salt** water
5. The haroset
6. A roasted egg
7. Four cups of the “fruit of the vine” (corresponding to the four, “I wills,” in [Exodus 6](#))

#### B. The preparation for the Passover

1. Thorough cleaning and household search for **leaven** ([Exodus 13:7-8](#)).
2. On the evening before Passover, a symbolic search for crumbs is done.

#### C. The Passover Seder

1. Lighting of the candles
2. Cup of **Sanctification** (the first of the four cups of the “fruit of the vine”)
3. Washing of the hands
4. The karpas (bitter herbs) are dipped in salt water, blessed, and eaten.
5. Breaking of the afikomen (matzah)
6. The Haggadah or **“telling”**

7. The Cup of Thanksgiving or **Deliverance**
8. The breaking and eating of the remaining matzah (not the afikomen)
9. Eating of the bitter herbs with matzah
10. Eating of the "Hillel sandwich"
11. The afikomen is brought out of its hiding place
12. The Cup of **Redemption** or Judgment
13. The Cup of **Acceptance** or Cup of the Kingdom
14. The door is opened
15. The door is shut

### Application (What is the point?) & Personalization (What do I do with that?)

What does this Jewish feast have to do with us? Why was it so important that the last few hours of Christ's life before the crucifixion be spent having a Passover Seder with His disciples? As was His custom, He uses this Passover as a picture to teach us some important truths. He shows us the:

1. Passing of the Covenant (**Matthew 26:26-29: 26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." 27 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. 28 For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. 29 But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."**)
2. Presence of the Christ (even though the lamb is no longer in today's Seder, Jesus is in the Seder):
  - Jesus **is** the Passover Lamb (the spotless, no bone broken sacrifice) (**John 1:29: The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"**)
  - Jesus **is** the leaven-free (sinless) matzah (**John 18:38f: I find no fault in him at all**)
  - Jesus **is** the broken afikomen (**1 Corinthians 5:7b: For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.**). Jesus was given stripes, broken, pierced, wrapped in a linen cloth, hidden away (buried for 3 days), and was brought forth from hiding (His resurrection) and delivered us from spiritual bondage
  - Jesus **took** the bitterness of God's judgment for us (**Isaiah 53:5: But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.**)
3. Picture in the Cups (**Exodus 6:6-7**)

- First: Cup of Sanctification (“**I will bring you out**”): God set us apart for Himself
- Second: Cup of Deliverance (“**I will rescue you**”): We have been delivered
- Third: Cup of Redemption (“**I will redeem you**”): Jesus said in **1 Corinthians 11:25**, “**This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.**” Jesus referenced this cup in the Garden of Gethsemane in **Luke 22:42**: **Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.**
- Fourth: Cup of Acceptance (“**I will take you and be your God**”): This is the cup Jesus referred to in **Luke 22:18**, “**I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.**”

Many of you are new to our church and we are so glad that you are here. We cared enough for you to invite you to church because we love you. We want you to be present in heaven with Jesus when He drinks from this fourth cup and accepts those that have trusted in Him. So, may you know the love, the grace, the joy, the peace, and the hope found in the fourth cup.

Conclusion: It’s all about Jesus. It’s only about Jesus. It’s always about **Jesus**.

# Moses and the Exodus: Crossing the Red Sea

---

## Review

So far in this five-week series, we have seen:

- The children of Israel become **slaves** in Egypt
- Moses **rises** to a position of Israelite leadership because of a conversation with God in a bush
- Moses and Aaron stand up to Pharaoh and demonstrate God's power using **10** plagues
- Pharaoh was convinced to let the Israelites **go** after the tenth plague (death of the firstborn)

Today is the, 'exodus,' part of, "Moses and the Exodus." The Israelites cross the Red Sea and the Lord is victorious over Pharaoh and the Egyptians. After today's lesson, Egypt never challenges Israel again.

Key Thought: God will do things in His time, in His way, and for His glory

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Exodus 13:17-14:31 (Author = Moses)

### Exodus 13: The Wilderness Way

**17 Then it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near** [once again we see God ignores the short path for the betterment of His people]; **for God said, "Lest perhaps the people change their minds** [literally, repent] **when they see war, and return to Egypt."** [God did not want the unarmed Israelites fighting a battle with the Egyptians (yes, Egyptians) because the Egyptians had outposts along the direct route to Canaan. God had to deal with Egypt fully before the Israelites could live in Canaan safely.] **18 So God led the people around by way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. And the children of Israel** [somewhere between two and three **million**] **went up in orderly ranks** [there is much debate about what this word means, but the simplest explanation is that they marched orderly] **out of the land of Egypt.** [Remember that God said they would leave and they are leaving]

**19 And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he** [Joseph] **had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here with you."** [This is the fulfilling of the promise that Joseph made his descendants swear to him on his deathbed in **Genesis 50:24-26** to transport his bones back to Canaan. **David Guzik: His coffin laid above ground for . . . years until it was taken back to Canaan. It was a silent witness all those years that Israel was going back to the Promised Land, just as God had said—now the promise was being fulfilled. Acts 7:10** states that other patriarch's bones (probably Jacob's too) were taken out of Egypt.]

**20 So they took their journey from Succoth and camped in Etham at the edge of the wilderness. 21 And the LORD** [this is a shift from, 'God,' to, '**LORD**'] **went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. 22 He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people. [Psalm 84:11, 105:39;** An interesting side note is that in **1 Corinthians 10:1-2**, Paul says that the Israelites are **baptized** into Moses by being under this cloud and going through the Red Sea—an interesting thought!]

## Exodus 14: The Red Sea Crossing

**1** Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: **2** “Speak to the children of Israel, that they turn and camp before Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, opposite Baal Zephon; you shall camp before it by the sea. [This would have been about three days’ journey from where they started] **3** For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, ‘They *are* bewildered [perplexed, confused] by the land; the wilderness has closed them in.’ **4** Then I will harden [to make **strong**, rigid, hard—resulting in passionate action; this does not mean God changed Pharaoh’s heart—God **intensified** what already existed] Pharaoh’s heart [Pharaoh’s heart had been hardened by God to not let the people go, then it was softened by the plague of death, and now it is hardened again (**Proverbs 21:1** is true)], so that he will pursue them; and I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, that the Egyptians may know that I *am* the LORD.” And they did so. [The intended result of God’s actions is the glory and fame of God. God had to remove the Egyptian threat so that His people could occupy Canaan (the Promised Land) safely]

**5** Now it was told the king of Egypt that the people had fled, and the heart of Pharaoh and his servants was turned against the people; and they said, “Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?” [I can think of ten reasons, but Pharaoh was probably focused on the fact that they realized that the slave labor was gone and they had to go back to real work] **6** So he made ready his chariot and took his people with him. **7** Also, he took six hundred choice chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt with captains over every one of them. **8** And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the children of Israel; and the children of Israel went out with boldness. **9** So the Egyptians pursued them, all the horses *and* chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen and his army, and overtook them camping by the sea beside Pi Hahiroth, before Baal Zephon.

**10** And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid [this makes sense—the largest army in the world is chasing them and the Israelites have no army—just Moses and Aaron and a couple of shepherd staffs], and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD [oh that all of our troubles would drive us to the Lord].

**11** Then they said to Moses, “Because *there were* no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? **12** *Is* this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, ‘Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians’? For *it would have been* better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness.” [The, ‘I told you so,’ and, ‘You never had our best interests at heart,’ club members show up]

This is an opportunity for Moses. He can run or he can lead. We have seen in Moses’ past that when he sees people being taken advantage of, he rushes in and acts.

**13** And Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. **14** The LORD will fight [engage in battle] for you, and you shall hold your peace [be silent and keep quiet].” [Remember that God told Moses that God would gain honor over Pharaoh. God did not (as far as we know) tell Moses **how** He was going to gain honor over Pharaoh. Moses simply had to trust God.]

**15 And the LORD said to Moses, “Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward** [and He is still telling us to go forward today]. **16 But lift up your rod** [shepherd staff, walking stick, branch], **and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide** [split, break] **it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.** **17 And I indeed will harden the hearts of the Egyptians** [broader than just Pharaoh this time to include all of the Egyptians following], **and they** [the Egyptians] **shall follow them** [the Israelites]. **So I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, his chariots, and his horsemen.** **18 Then the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gained honor for Myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen.”** [In [Exodus 5:2](#), Pharaoh asked who God was. God is about to answer.]

**19 And the Angel of God** [this is a pre-incarnate manifestation of [Jesus](#)], **who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them** [Jesus moved into the space of conflict and stood in the gap to protect His Father’s children]; **and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them.** [The Spirit is protecting the front and the rear. The Son is protecting the rear. The Father is directing the show. The entire Trinity is active.] **20 So it** [the pillar of cloud] **came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel. Thus it was a cloud and darkness to the one** [the Egyptians], **and it gave light by night to the other** [the Israelites], **so that the one** [the Egyptians] **did not come near the other** [the Israelites] **all that night.**

**21 Then Moses stretched out his hand** [What did God tell him to stretch out? God told him to lift up his rod and his hand over the sea] **over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back** [not Moses, not Moses’ hand, not the rod, but the LORD caused it] **by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea into dry land, and the waters were divided** [split, [broken](#)]. [This verse reminds me of [Genesis 1](#) where the dry land came out of the sea and God divided the waters] **22 So the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry ground, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.** **23 And the Egyptians pursued and went after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh’s horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.**

**24 Now it came to pass, in the morning watch, that the LORD looked down upon the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud, and He troubled** [confused, moved noisily around in] **the army of the Egyptians.** [Remember that these men had recently lost their sons, their brothers, and their fathers, and they were tired from days of pursuing the Israelites and were up early this morning to sounds coming from the desert that they had never heard before—[Psalm 77:17-20](#)] **25 And He** [the LORD] **took off their chariot wheels, so that they drove them with difficulty; and the Egyptians said, “Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians.”** [The LORD turned their massive weapons (chariots) into massive headaches]

**26 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand** [Why did God have Moses stretch out his hand? Was that really necessary? Perhaps to allow Moses to be seen as the messenger of God] **over the sea, that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians, on their chariots, and on their horsemen.”** **27 And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and when the morning appeared, the sea returned to its full depth** [returned to its flowing], **while the Egyptians were fleeing into it. So the LORD overthrew** [not Moses, not Moses’ hand, not Moses’ rod, but the LORD] **the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.** **28**

**Then the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, *and* all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained** [all the king's horses and all the king's men could not put themselves back together again]. **29 But the children of Israel had walked on dry *land* in the midst of the sea, and the waters *were* a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.**

**30 So the LORD saved** [saved, **delivered**] **Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore.** [If the Egyptians were dead on the seashore, what was left? Their armor, their swords, their shields, etc. This was an efficient way to equip an army.] **31 Thus Israel saw the great work which the LORD had done in Egypt; so the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD and His servant Moses.** [What a high note to end on! God saves the day, the bad guys are defeated, Israel trusts the LORD, and Moses is a hero.]

**Coffman: Spiritually, this event is unsurpassed by anything else in the O. T. Here we see faith rewarded, and unbelief defeated and destroyed. We see proud tyranny and oppression cast down to oblivion and death. We see the mightiest military machine on earth broken, defeated, and destroyed by a shepherd's crook. We see a nation of slaves given their liberty and we see the great pantheon of pagan gods yield their dominion unequivocally to the one true and Almighty Living God, Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews. . . . Blessed be the name of the Lord. Amen.**

### **Apply (What is the point?)**

1. God will do things in His time
2. God will do things in His way
3. God will do things for His glory

### **Personalize (What do I do with that?)**

1. Be content with God's **time**
2. Be content with God's **way**
3. Be content with giving God **glory**

### **Suggested resources:**

Cecil B. DeMille's version at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jo0JMs-evQU>

Preface of Coffman's Commentary on **Exodus 14**: <http://bit.ly/mTkiin>

# The Essential 100

## A Bible overview plan for 2011-2012

The Essential 100 (E100) is a systematic approach that guides readers through the big picture of the Bible. It is a carefully selected list of short Bible passages—50 from the Old Testament and 50 from the New Testament. Each testament is broken up into ten, five-week series. We will move from Old to New Testaments every five weeks. My goal is to teach three of the five lessons in every series.

The E100 in Sunday school: We will REAP (read, explain, apply, and personalize) one passage each week and finish a series every five weeks. Each lesson will include a key verse for memorization. At the end of two years, we will have covered the essential 100 passages in the Bible.

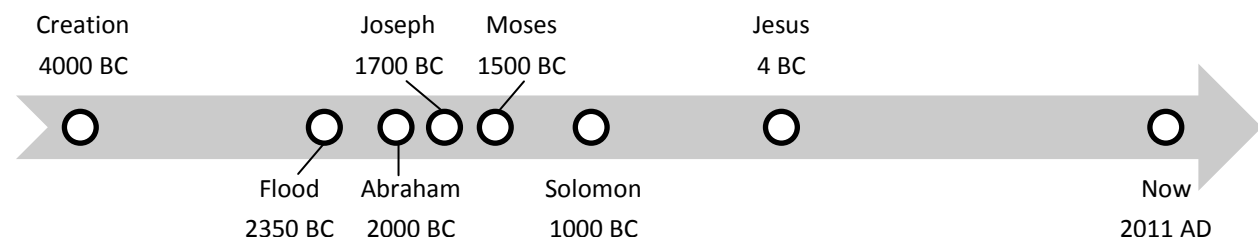
Additional information: To learn more about The E100 program and to obtain additional resources, visit [e100challenge.com](http://e100challenge.com). Our Sunday school website is [stuartheights.org/sundayschool](http://stuartheights.org/sundayschool).

## The Schedule: The Law and the Land

This is our fifth five-week series in the Old Testament. So far, we have looked at In the Beginning, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, The Story of Joseph, and Moses and the Exodus. Now we shift to the Law.

Date	Lesson	Key Verse(s)	Passage	Speaker
October 16	The Ten Commandments	Exodus 20:1-3	Exodus 19:1-20:21	Jim Fleming
October 23	The Golden Calf	Exodus 32:7-8	Exodus 32-34	Barry Cole
October 30	Joshua Succeeds Moses	Joshua 1:5-6	Joshua 1	Jim Fleming
November 6	Crossing the Jordan	Joshua 3:15-16	Joshua 3-4	Chandalee Chrisman
November 13	The Fall of Jericho	Joshua 6:20	Joshua 5:13-6:27	Jim Fleming

Assuming a literal interpretation of Bible dates, the following timeline is close:



For the first 2,500 years of the world's history, the patriarchs received revelation from God and orally passed it on, but now, approximately 1450 BC, the Law is given. Now there is a written account of God's expectations instead of an oral tradition. This period of dominance of the Law will last until Jesus frees everyone from the burden of the Law nearly 1,500 years later.



# The Law and the Land: The Ten Commandments

---

## Preview: I Do

Covenant: a covenant is a legally binding **contract** (see [Proverbs 2:16-17](#) and [Ezekiel 16:8](#))

Marriage: marriage is a covenant of **companionship** ([Malachi 2:14](#))

Why talk about these terms? God is about to enter into a marriage-like covenant with Israel through the giving them the Law. Suggested resource: [teachings.jim314.com](http://teachings.jim314.com) (see [Marriage & the 10 Commandments](#))

In [Exodus 6:6-7](#), God gives the Israelites four promises: **“I will bring you out.” “I will rescue you.” “I will redeem you.” “I will take you.”** These are also the four promises that a Jewish groom makes to his bride under the chuppah (the Jewish wedding canopy). The Jewish wedding is based off Moses receiving the Ten Commandments. God Himself is the wedding canopy. God is the groom. Israel is the bride.

The Ten Commandments are not just a dry list of do’s and don’ts. Throughout the rest of the Old Testament, God goes back to these ‘wedding vows.’ He says of Israel that they, **“played the harlot”** in [Judges 8:33](#), [1 Chronicles 5:25](#), and [Jeremiah 3:6](#). In [Jeremiah 3:8](#), God even says that he gave Israel a, **“certificate of divorce”** for her adultery. This is all marriage language. Israel broke God’s heart and yet God always loved her. He always forgave her. He was always faithful to her. He took His wife back and Israel turned their backs on God’s Son Jesus. This is all marriage language.

God was trying to build a relationship with His people ([Exodus 19:4-6](#)). The Ten Commandments show us what God really cares about in three main areas. The first four commandments center on our relationship with God ([Exodus 20:2-11](#)). The next few commandments address our relationship with others ([Exodus 20:12-14, 16](#)) and the third group of commandments deals with our relationship to things ([Exodus 20:15, 17](#)). Most of our wedding vows covered all of these areas.

Key Thought: The Ten Commandments show us what is important to God: a right relationship with His people

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Exodus 19:1-20:21 (Author = Moses)

### Exodus 19

#### Israel at Mount Sinai

**1 In the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt** [hundreds of years in captivity and three months on their own—the nation at this point is equivalent to an infant or a toddler], **on the same day, they came to the Wilderness of Sinai** [pronounced, see-NAH-ee, meaning ‘thorny’]. **2 For they had departed from Rephidim, had come to the Wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness. So Israel camped there before the mountain.**

**3** And Moses [*drawn*] went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: **4** ‘You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and *how* I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself. **5** Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth *is* Mine. **6** And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These *are* the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.” [The groom just gave the terms]

**7** So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the LORD commanded him. **8** Then all the people answered together and said, “All that the LORD has spoken we will do.” So Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD. [The bride just responded in the affirmative] **9** And the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, I come to you in the thick [dark] cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you forever.”

So Moses told the words of the people to the LORD.

**10** Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go to the people and consecrate [*prepare*, dedicate] them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes [because you clean up for a wedding]. **11** And let them be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people [Does this ‘third day’ language remind you of anything? The resurrection]. **12** You shall set bounds for the people all around, saying, ‘Take heed to yourselves *that* you do *not* go up to the mountain or touch its base. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death. **13** Not a hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned or shot *with an arrow*; whether man or beast, he shall not live.’ When the trumpet sounds long, they shall come near the mountain.”

**14** So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and sanctified the people, and they washed their clothes. **15** And he said to the people, “Be ready for the third day; do not come near *your* wives.”

**16** Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings [literally, *voices* and sounds] and lightnings, and a thick [a different Hebrew word meaning, ‘heavy, oppressive, massive’] cloud on the mountain [we have already seen in the Bible that a cloud represents God’s presence]; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who *were* in the camp trembled. **17** And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. **18** Now Mount Sinai *was* completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire [God is burning this memory in their minds]. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly [with exceeding great force]. **19** And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice. **20** Then the LORD came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

**21** And the LORD said to Moses, “Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to gaze at the LORD, and many of them perish. **22** Also let the priests who come near the LORD consecrate themselves, lest the LORD break out against them.” [Notice how much care God is giving to protecting the Israelites—remember that for next week’s lesson on the Golden Calf]

**23 But Moses said to the LORD, “The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai; for You warned us, saying, ‘Set bounds around the mountain and consecrate it.’”** [Bad idea to tell God that His advice is not good]

**24 Then the LORD said to him, “Away! Get down and then come up, you and Aaron with you** [again with Moses’ disobedience causing Aaron to have to get involved]. **But do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the LORD, lest He break out against them.”** **25 So Moses went down to the people and spoke to them.**

## Exodus 20

### The Ten Commandments

**1 And God spoke all these words** [the assumption is that Moses had come back up to hear this], **saying:**

**2 “I am the LORD** [Jehovah] **your God** [Elohiym], **who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.** [We are crystal clear on who we are making this covenant with]

**3 “You shall have no other** [different] **gods** [Elohiym] **before Me** [my face]. [God: I am your first love]

**4 “You shall not make for yourself a carved image** [idol]—**any likeness** [representation] **of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth** [that pretty much covers everything]; **5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity** [perversity, depravity] **of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me,** **6 but showing mercy** [chesed—loving-kindness] **to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.** [God: I will tolerate no competition]

**7 “You shall not take the name** [name, reputation, glory, fame] **of the LORD your God in vain** [empty], **for the LORD will not hold him** [innocent] **guiltless who takes His name in vain.** [God: My name has weight and significance]

**8 “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy** [set apart as sacred]. **9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work** [business], **10 but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. 11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.** [God: You must regularly rest—a tired bride does Me no good; **Rob Bell (Velvet Elvis): Sabbath is a day when my work is done, even if it isn’t.**]

**12 “Honor** [make heavy] **your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.** [God: Your earthly relationship to your parents is important too—you will live longer if you do this]

**13 “You shall not murder** [covers both premeditated and accidental murder]. [God: I value all human life]

**14 “You shall not commit adultery** [used literally between a man and a woman and also figuratively of idolatrous worship]. [God: Sexual fidelity to your earthly spouse is essential]

**15 “You shall not steal.** [God: I am your provider and it is not your job to take from others]

**16 “You shall not bear** [testify] **false** [lies, deceptions, disappointments, falsehoods] **witness** [testimony/evidence of things or people] **against your neighbor** [friend]. [God: Tell the truth—I value it (because I AM Truth)]

**17 “You shall not covet** [desire, delight, take **pleasure** in] **your neighbor’s** [friend’s] **house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s.”** [God: Be satisfied with what you have (Me)—I AM all you need]

### The People Afraid of God’s Presence

**18 Now all the people witnessed the thunderings** [voices], **the lightning flashes** [literally, ‘torch’], **the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off. 19 Then they said to Moses, “You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.”**

**20 And Moses said to the people, “Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin.” 21 So the people stood afar off, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was.** [Again, notice how clearly the Israelites understand the borders that God has set up and how powerful God is—remember that for next week’s lesson on the Golden Calf]

Challenge: Let all your relationships reflect God’s priorities

**Question: Are we under the authority of the Ten Commandments today?** (See **Romans** for the answer)

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. God desires relationship with us
2. God is clear in His expectations for His relationships
3. God is too powerful to interact with directly—a **mediator** is needed

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Recommit every day to your relationship with God
2. **Study** the Scriptures to learn how to live rightly in relationship with God
3. Trust Jesus to be your Mediator

# The Law and the Land: The Golden Calf

---

## Preview: Up Close and Personal

God really hates sin (**Exodus 32:9-10**). Moses did, too (**Exodus 32:19-20**) and He is willing to do whatever it takes to save His people (**Exodus 32:11-14, 31-32**). In so doing, he foreshadows what Jesus would do many years later. God and Moses had developed a very personal relationship (**Exodus 33:11**). That is what God wants with all people. He created us in his own image and wants us to love and follow him with our whole heart. The question is do you want a relationship with him?

Key Thought: God has a “no compromise” attitude toward sin

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Exodus 32-34 (Author = Moses)

### Exodus 32

#### The Gold Calf

Moses has been gone for 40 days and he left Aaron in charge.

**1** Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, “Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for *as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.*” [They seem to have imagined that Moses had been killed in the thunders of the mountain (**Exodus 24:15-18**)]

**2** And Aaron said to them, “Break off the golden earrings which *are* in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring *them* to me.” **3** So all the people broke off the golden earrings which *were* in their ears, and brought *them* to Aaron. **4** And he received *the gold* from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf.

Then they said, “*This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!*”

**5** So when Aaron saw *it*, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, “*Tomorrow is a feast to the LORD.*” **6** Then they rose early on the next day, offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

[Cut to the mountain] **7** And the LORD said to Moses, “Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted *themselves*. **8** They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, ‘*This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!*’” **9** And the LORD said to Moses, “I have seen this people, and indeed it *is* a stiff-necked people [stubborn, prideful; Wesley’s Notes on the Bible: Unapt to come under the yoke of the divine law, averse to all good, and prone to evil, obstinate to the methods of cure]! **10** Now therefore, let Me alone, that My

**wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation.”**

[The only other person that God told to leave Him alone Jacob during a wrestling match ([Genesis 32](#))]

**11 Then Moses pleaded with the LORD his God, and said: “LORD, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? 12 Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, ‘He brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth’? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and relent [to have compassion] from this harm to Your people. 13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, ‘I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.’” 14 So the LORD relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people.** [This is fatherly forgiveness shown in a parent-child relationship. Our God shows us how to forgive—even when His heart ached]

**15 And Moses turned and went down from the mountain, and the two tablets of the Testimony were in his hand. The tablets were written on both sides; on the one side and on the other they were written. 16 Now the tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God engraved on the tablets.**

Adam Clarke

1. We may conceive the tables of stone to have been *thin slabs* or a kind of *slate*, and the writing on the back side to have been a *continuation* of that on the front, the first not being sufficient to contain the whole.

2. Or the writing on the back side was probably the *precepts* that *accompanied* the ten commandments; the latter were written by the Lord, the former by Moses

3. Or the same words were written on both sides, so that when held up, two parties might read at the same time

**17 And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, “There is a noise of war in the camp.”**

**18 But he said:**

**“It is not the noise of the shout of victory,**

**Nor the noise of the cry of defeat,**

**But the sound of singing I hear.”**

**19 So it was, as soon as he came near the camp, that he saw the calf and the dancing. So Moses’ anger became hot, and he cast the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain. 20 Then he took the calf which they had made, burned it in the fire, and ground it to powder; and he**

scattered *it* on the water and made the children of Israel drink *it*. **21** And Moses said to Aaron, “What did this people do to you that you have brought so great a sin upon them?”

**22** So Aaron said, “Do not let the anger of my lord become hot. You know the people, that they *are set* on evil. **23** For they said to me, ‘Make us gods that shall go before us; *as for* this Moses, the man who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’ **24** And I said to them, ‘Whoever has any gold, let them break *it* off.’ So they gave *it* to me, and I cast it into the fire, and this calf came out.” [HOLY COW!]

**25** Now when Moses saw that the people *were unrestrained* [similar in meaning to, ‘partying’] (for Aaron had not restrained them, to *their* shame among their enemies) [Psalm 44:13a: You make us a reproach to our neighbors], **26** then Moses stood in the entrance of the camp, and said, “Whoever *is* on the LORD’s side—*come to me!*” [This was an open invitation] And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him [Moses was a Levite, so this may have played in to their decision to go with Moses]. **27** And he said to them, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel: ‘Let every man put his sword on his side, and go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and let every man kill his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.’” [John Gill: *not into the tents, where good men might be bemoaning the sin committed, but throughout the streets, where many were loitering, it being a holy day with the idolaters*] **28** So the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And about three thousand men [most likely the ringleaders of the sin] of the people fell that day. **29** Then Moses said, “Consecrate yourselves today to the LORD [this is where the Levites became priests], that He may bestow on you a blessing this day, for every man has opposed his son and his brother.”

**30** Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses said to the people, “You have committed a great sin. So now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.” **31** Then Moses returned to the LORD and said, “Oh, these people have committed a great sin, and have made for themselves a god of gold! **32** Yet now, if You will forgive their sin—but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written.” [“your book” (Isaiah 4:3, Daniel 12:1, Revelation 3:5)]

**33** And the LORD said to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book [justice]. **34** Now therefore, go, lead the people to *the place* of which I have spoken to you. Behold, My Angel shall go before you. Nevertheless, in the day when I visit for punishment, I will visit punishment upon them for their sin.”

**35** So the LORD plagued the people because of what they did with the calf which Aaron made. [The Jews still blame their troubles on the sin from this story to this day, “The dust of the golden calf still afflicts the Jewish people.”]

## Exodus 33

### The Command to Leave Sinai

**1** Then the LORD said to Moses, “Depart *and* go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying,



**'To your descendants I will give it.'** **2** And I will send *My Angel* before you, and I will drive out the Canaanite and the Amorite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite. **3** *Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people.*" [God still sounds angry. *Can you forgive and still be angry?*]

**4** And when the people heard this bad news [the bad news was that God would not be physically present with them like He was when He came and delivered them out of Egypt ([Exodus 3:8](#))], *they mourned, and no one put on his ornaments.* **5** For the LORD had said to Moses, "Say to the children of Israel, 'You *are* a stiff-necked people. I could come up into your midst in one moment and consume you. Now therefore, take off your ornaments, that I may know what to do to you.'" **6** So the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments [jewelry and fine clothes—God is addressing their pride here] *by Mount Horeb.*

### Moses Meets with the LORD

**7** Moses took his tent and pitched it outside the camp, far from the camp [because God was not with them], and called it the tabernacle of meeting. And it came to pass *that everyone who sought the LORD went out to the tabernacle of meeting which was outside the camp.* **8** So it was, whenever Moses went out to the tabernacle, *that all the people rose, and each man stood at his tent door and watched Moses until he had gone into the tabernacle.* **9** And it came to pass, when Moses entered the tabernacle, that the pillar of cloud descended and stood *at the door of the tabernacle, and the LORD talked with Moses.* **10** All the people saw the pillar of cloud standing *at the tabernacle door, and all the people rose and worshiped, each man in his tent door.* **11** So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend [Like Adam and God's relationship in the Garden of Eden; [John Gill: without any reserve or show of authority](#)]. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.

### The Promise of God's Presence

**12** Then Moses said to the LORD, "See, You say to me, 'Bring up this people.' But You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight.' **13** Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation *is* Your people."

**14** And He said, "My Presence will go *with you*, and I will give you rest." [Mercy]

**15** Then he said to Him, "If Your Presence does not go *with us*, do not bring us up from here. **16** For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us? So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who *are* upon the face of the earth." [Moses: The reason we are different is You—please don't go away]

**17** So the LORD said to Moses, "I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name." [More mercy]

**18** And he said, "Please, show me Your glory."

**19** Then He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion [more mercy]." **20** But He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live." **21** And the LORD said, "Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock [this place by the LORD on the rock was Jesus]. **22** So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. **23** Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen."

## Exodus 34

### Moses Makes New Tablets

**1** And the LORD said to Moses, "Cut two tablets of stone like the first *ones*, and I will write on *these* tablets the words that were on the first tablets which you broke. **2** So be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself to Me there on the top of the mountain. **3** And no man shall come up with you, and let no man be seen throughout all the mountain; let neither flocks nor herds feed before that mountain."

**4** So he cut two tablets of stone like the first *ones*. Then Moses rose early in the morning and went up Mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him; and he took in his hand the two tablets of stone.

**5** Now the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD [God may have told Moses His unutterable, ineffable name here]. **6** And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, **7** keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."

**8** So Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped. **9** Then he said, "If now I have found grace in Your sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray, go among us, even though we *are* a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as Your inheritance."

### The Covenant Renewed

**10** And He said: "Behold, I make a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation; and all the people among whom you *are* shall see the work of the LORD. For it *is* an awesome thing that I will do with you. **11** Observe what I command you this day. Behold, I am driving out from before you the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite. **12** Take heed to yourself, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where you are going, lest it be a snare in your midst. **13** But you shall destroy their altars, break their *sacred* pillars, and cut down their wooden images **14** (for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name *is* Jealous, *is* a jealous God), **15** lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they play the harlot with their gods and make sacrifice to their gods, and *one of them* invites you and you eat of his sacrifice, **16** and you take of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters play the harlot with their gods and make your sons play the harlot with their gods.

**17 “You shall make no molded gods for yourselves.**

**18 “The Feast of Unleavened Bread you shall keep. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, in the appointed time of the month of Abib; for in the month of Abib you came out from Egypt.**

**19 “All that open the womb *are* Mine, and every male firstborn among your livestock, *whether* ox or sheep. 20 But the firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb. And if you will not redeem *him*, then you shall break his neck. All the firstborn of your sons you shall redeem.**

**“And none shall appear before Me empty-handed.**

**21 “Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; in plowing time and in harvest you shall rest.**

**22 “And you shall observe the Feast of Weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the year’s end.**

**23 “Three times in the year all your men shall appear before the Lord, the LORD God of Israel. 24 For I will cast out the nations before you and enlarge your borders; neither will any man covet your land when you go up to appear before the LORD your God three times in the year.**

**25 “You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leaven, nor shall the sacrifice of the Feast of the Passover be left until morning.**

**26 “The first of the firstfruits of your land you shall bring to the house of the LORD your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother’s milk.”**

**27 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Write these words, for according to the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.” 28 So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. And He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.**

### The Shining Face of Moses



**29 Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the Testimony *were* in Moses’ hand when he came down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone [Michelangelo’s sculpture of Moses shows Moses with horns because in the Latin Bible, “shine” translates “horns”] **while he talked with Him. 30 So when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. 31 Then Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned to him; and Moses talked with them. 32 Afterward all the children of Israel came near, and he gave them as commandments all that the LORD had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. 33 And when****

**Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil** [this begins the veiled relationship that God has with His people until Jesus' sacrifice tears the veil 1,500 years later] **on his face. 34 But whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with Him, he would take the veil off until he came out; and he would come out and speak to the children of Israel whatever he had been commanded. 35 And whenever the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone, then Moses would put the veil on his face again** [separation from God], **until he went in to speak with Him.**

Challenge: God paid a high price for a relationship with you. What will you do for Him?

### **Apply (What is the point?)**

1. God is just
2. God is merciful
3. God forgives

### **Personalize (What do I do with that?)**

1. Understand you are a sinner
2. Accept God's grace
3. Be like Moses and let your little light shine!

# The Law and the Land: Joshua Succeeds Moses

---

## Introduction

Does anyone remember the 4 x 100 relay from the Beijing Olympics? Watch this video. [Summary: During the women's semifinals, the highly touted American team was disqualified when Lauryn Williams left her lane to retrieve a dropped baton during the transfer from Torri Edwards. In addition, during the men's semifinals, the highly touted American team did not qualify due to a baton drop between Darvis Patton and Tyson Gay.]

## Preview: Passing the Baton

Up to this point in our overview of the Old Testament, Moses has played a major role. He was used by God to deliver the Israelites out of Egypt, he has received the Law, and he led the children of Israel out of the wilderness. He dies at age 120 and someone new has to lead the Israelites. Here is an overview of Joshua's life:

- Joshua was born in Egypt to Nun and was about **40** years old at the time of the Exodus
- Joshua is first mentioned in his leadership of the Israelites in the fight against the Amalekites (**Exodus 17**). Strangely enough, he is given no introduction, which implies that he was already well known among the Israelites.
- Served as Moses' **assistant**/servant
- Went up on Sinai with Moses (at least part of the way) to get the 10 Commandments (**Exodus 32**)
- Sent with 11 others to view the Promised Land (**Numbers 13**). He and **Caleb** bring back a good report about the Promised Land (**Numbers 14**).
- Ordained to be Moses' successor (**Numbers 27** and **Deuteronomy 31**)
- Is described by God as one who "**wholly followed the Lord**" in **Numbers 32:11-12** (he and Caleb were the two oldest Israelites alive after Moses died)
- Takes over as Moses' successor around the age of **80** (he trained for the job for around 40 years)
- God makes promises to him (**Joshua 1**)
- Leads Israel into Canaan (**Joshua 1-4**)
- Renews circumcision and re-establishes the Passover (**Joshua 5**)
- Was a military genius (in **six** years he captured Jericho in **Joshua 6**, won the battle of Ai in **Joshua 8**, defeated seven kings in **Joshua 9-10**, and completed the conquest of the whole land in **Joshua 11**)—an entire chapter (**Joshua 12**) is dedicated to listing the kings he defeated (**six** nations and **31** kings)
- He set up the tabernacle at Shiloh (**Joshua 18**)
- Set up the cities of refuge (**Joshua 20**)
- Set aside 48 cities for the Levites (**Joshua 21**)
- Preached a sermon to Israel in **Joshua 23-24** before his death
- Told the Israelites to, "**Choose for yourselves this day**," in **Joshua 24** (reminiscent of Moses)
- Dies at age 110 (after **30** years of leadership service) with the "no one led them like Joshua" concept firmly rooted in Israeli history

In **Joshua 1**, God promised to give Joshua land, success, and a leadership platform as God had given Moses (**Joshua 1:3-6**). Best of all, God promised to be with Joshua (**Joshua 1:5**). In return, God asked for Joshua's obedience (**Joshua 1:7**)—and that is exactly what God got.

Key Thought: Moses passed the baton to Joshua and Joshua ran **well** with it

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Joshua 1 (Author = Joshua)

Note: This is the first lesson in our Old Testament series that Moses is not the author of the text.

Old Testament				New Testament	
Law	Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Major Prophets	Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel	Gospels	Matthew Mark Luke John
					Acts of the Apostles
History	Joshua Judges Ruth 1-2 Samuel 1-2 Kings 1-2 Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah Esther	Minor Prophets	Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi	Pauline Epistles	Romans 1-2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1-2 Thessalonians 1-2 Timothy Titus Philemon
					General Epistles
Wisdom	Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon				

### God's Commission to Joshua

**1 After the death of Moses the servant** [John Wesley: When God has work to do, he will either find or make instruments fit to carry it on. *Moses the servant* is dead; but God the master is not.] **of the LORD** [Matthew Henry: The life of Moses made way for Joshua, and prepared the people for what was to be done by him. Thus the law is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ: and then the death of Moses made room for Joshua; thus we are dead to the law, our first husband, that we may be *married to Christ*, **Romans 7:4.**], **it came to pass that the LORD spoke** [**Hebrews 1:1** gives many options for this discourse] **to Joshua the son of Nun** [Coffman: The original name of this leader was Oshea [Hoshea in the NKJV] (**Numbers 13:8**), but just as the names of Abram, Sarai, etc were changed, so was that of Joshua. It was changed to Jehoshua (or, Joshua). The Greek form of the name is Jesus, and it means Jehovah is

deliverance, or Jehovah is salvation. Not merely in this name, but in a few other salient particulars, Joshua represents the Lord Jesus Christ in his life and achievement: (1) Like Christ, Joshua did what Moses and the Law could not do; (2) He led the people into Canaan; Christ leads his people into heaven; and (3) Both Joshua and Jesus began their commission on the banks of the Jordan River.], **Moses' assistant** [minister, servant, assistant, attendant, personal servant; **Fausset's Bible Dictionary: Joshua learned to rule by obeying first; then he ruled for God, not self**], **saying: 2 "Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise** [an imperative], **go over** [an imperative] **this Jordan, you and all this people** [600,000 men plus the women and children make at least a few **million**], **to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel. 3 Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given** [in the 'perfect' mood in Hebrew—denoting an already completed action] **you, as I said to Moses. 4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea** [Mediterranean Sea] **toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory** [show this on a map; **Adam Clarke: The Israelites did not possess the full extent of this grant till the days of David**]. **5 No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you** [to let **drop**, abandon, relax, refrain, forsake, to let go, to refrain, let alone, to be quiet] **nor forsake** [to leave, to depart from, leave behind, leave, let alone, to leave, abandon, forsake, neglect, apostatize, to let loose, set free, let go, free] **you. 6 Be strong** [an imperative, meaning to be strong, to prevail, to become strong, to be **firm**, to be resolute] **and of good courage** [an imperative, meaning to be strong, alert, courageous, brave, stout, bold, solid, hard—first time these words are used], **for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. 7 Only be strong** [same word as in **Joshua 1:6**] **and very** [an additional word from **Joshua 1:6**] **courageous** [same word as in **Joshua 1:6**—second time these words are used], **that you may observe** [to keep, have charge of, to keep, guard, keep watch and ward, protect, save **life**] **to do according to all the law** [*towrah*] **which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper** [to look at or upon, have **insight**, to give attention to, consider, ponder, be prudent, to have insight, have comprehension] **wherever you go. 8 This Book of the Law** [Joshua had his own copy of the Law—one that was separate from the one in the sanctuary] **shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate** [to roar, growl, groan, to utter, speak, to meditate, devise, muse, **imagine**] **in it day and night, that you may observe** [to keep, have charge of, to keep, guard, keep watch and ward, protect, save life] **to do according to all that is written in it** [**David Guzik: Joshua did not only need to read God's word. It had to be on his lips (shall not depart from your mouth), in his mind (meditate in it day and night), and he had to do it (observe to do according to all that is written).**]. **For then you will make your way** [literally, the way, road, distance, journey, manner, path, direction, habit, figuratively, the course of life or moral character] **prosperous** [to make prosperous, bring to successful issue, cause to prosper, to show or experience prosperity, prosper], **and then you will have good success** [same word translated prosper in **Joshua 1:7**]. **9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong** [same word as in **Joshua 1:6**] **and of good courage** [same word as in **Joshua 1:6**—third time these words are used]; **do not be afraid** [to cause to tremble, terrify, to tremble, feel dread], **nor be dismayed** [to be broken, be dismayed], **for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."**



## The Order to Cross the Jordan

**10 Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people** [Treasury of Scripture Knowledge: The *shoterim*, or officers, were different from the *shophetim*, who were the judges among the people. The *shoterim* have been supposed to be subordinate officers, whose business it was to see the decisions of the *shophetim* carried into effect.], **saying, 11 “Pass** [an imperative—Joshua's first words to his officers were a **command**] **through the camp and command the people, saying, ‘Prepare** [an imperative—Joshua's first words to the people (via his officers) were a command. Joshua is a, ‘take-charge’ kind of person.] **provisions** [food] **for yourselves, for within three days you will cross over this Jordan** [David Guzik: The waiting for God is often the most difficult part for us, but days of waiting are always days of preparation in God's work. There is no *wasted* time with God.], **to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess.”**

**12 And to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh Joshua spoke, saying, 13 “Remember the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, ‘The LORD your God is giving you rest and is giving you this land.’ 14 Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side of the Jordan. But you shall pass before your brethren armed, all your mighty men of valor, and help them, 15 until the LORD has given your brethren rest, as He gave you, and they also have taken possession of the land which the LORD your God is giving them. Then you shall return to the land of your possession and enjoy it, which Moses the LORD’s servant gave you on this side of the Jordan toward the sunrise.”** [Basically, your land is on this side of the river, but you have to go and fight for the other tribes’ land on the other side of the river and when we’re all done fighting, you can come back and enjoy this land]

**16 So they answered Joshua, saying, “All that you command us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. 17 Just as we heeded Moses in all things, so we will heed you** [from my perspective, this statement should have really concerned Joshua since the children of Israel did not obey Moses all that well]. **Only the LORD your God be with you, as He was with Moses. 18 Whoever rebels** [shows rebelliousness, disobedience, disobeys] **against your command and does not heed your words, in all that you command him, shall be put to death** [sounds like martial law]. **Only be strong** [same word as in [Joshua 1:6](#)] **and of good courage** [same word as in [Joshua 1:6](#)—fourth time these words are used].”

In case you’re wondering what the result of running well the race that God set before him, [Judges 2:7](#) is a great commentary on Joshua’s life: **So the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD which He had done for Israel.**

## Apply (What is the point?)

1. **Training** can last years
2. Ministry **must** be transferred
3. Do the **work**

## Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Train **hard**
2. Grab my **baton**
3. Run **well**

Suggested resource: Fausset’s Bible Dictionary ([studylight.org/dic/fbd/view.cgi?number=T2115](http://studylight.org/dic/fbd/view.cgi?number=T2115))

# The Law and the Land: Crossing the Jordan

---

## Preview

What is before us is not always what is there.

Key Thought: Step out

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Joshua 3-4 (Author = Joshua)

### Joshua 3

#### Israel Crosses the Jordan

**1 Then Joshua** [his name means, ‘**Savior**’ or ‘Deliverer’; **Who does else does that sound like?** This is another example of the OT pointing us to the NT] **rose early in the morning** [Joshua got up early to be with God—he was walking the walk, not just talking the talk of being a leader]; **and they set out from Acacia Grove and came to the Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they crossed over.** **2 So it was, after three days, that the officers went through the camp;** [According to the Jewish calendar, this is first month of the calendar year. **Joshua 4** tells us the Israelites cross on the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month and we know that Passover is the 14<sup>th</sup> of the first month of the year. They left Egypt on the 15<sup>th</sup>, after celebrating the Passover. They are entering the land five days before the **40**-year anniversary of the Exodus.] **3 and they commanded the people, saying, “When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests, the Levites, bearing it, then you shall set out from your place and go after it.** [The Cloud by day and the Fire by night cease to lead the Israelites here. God takes up residence in the Ark of the Tabernacle and it is He that is leading the people. “Ark” is mentioned 14 times in 17 verses. The people are commanded to **step** out and follow Him.] **4 Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure** [This was about 1,000 yards = a little over eight football fields lined end zone to end zone (about 1/2 mile). The Israelites have not passed this way before—God will show you the way to go]. **Do not come near it, that you may know the way by which you must go, for you have not passed this way before.”** [They did not know where they were going through the wilderness. Sometimes, we all misstep.]

**5 And Joshua said to the people, “Sanctify** [set yourselves apart from; Focus on the spiritual as this crossing is a spiritual battle, they are seeing the fulfillment of a covenant between God and His people. They would likely be starting to prepare for Passover four days from this point.] **yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you.”** [It is interesting to note that the Israelites entered the wilderness after celebrating Passover and they were entering the Promised Land in exactly time to celebrate Passover] **6 Then Joshua spoke to the priests, saying, “Take up the ark of the covenant and cross over before the people.”**

**So they took up the ark of the covenant and went before the people.** [Normally, the Ark was guarded/carried by the Levites. On special occasions, the **priests** carried the Ark. Here, the priests are carrying the Ark—without protection—going first into the raging river. Levites and Priests were

different. Just because a man was a Levite did not mean he was a priest—but priests were always Levites. This action indicated that the Ark (representing God) does not need their protection, but rather that the Ark (representing God) is stepping out first and is their protection and The Way. God just requires that we follow.]

**7 And the LORD said to Joshua, “This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you.** [Joshua was a faithful servant. He stepped out and accepted the call God was giving on his life. As leaders—in our homes, our workplace, in our church—we all have that call on our life: we are all called to step out in faith in whatever way God leads]

**8 You shall command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, saying, ‘When you have come to the edge of the water of the Jordan, you shall stand in the Jordan.’”** [The key here is that this is God’s leading, not Joshua’s timing. Joshua has answered the call God placed on his life and is stepping out in faith, not knowing the how but trusting that God will provide for all He has said will happen.]

**9 So Joshua said to the children of Israel, “Come here, and hear the words of the LORD your God.” 10 And Joshua said, “By this you shall know that the living God *is* among you, and *that* He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Hivites and the Perizzites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Jebusites: 11 Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is crossing over before you into the Jordan.** [The physical representation of God is crossing through the Jordan River before them—**preparing** the way (God was in the river with them)—reminiscent of Jesus preparing the way for us (by being on the cross so that we can enter a new life with God). Tell the story of the storm and the personal storm with Lupus. Stepping out is key in these verses.

**How (or what) is God calling you to step out (to)?** Stone representation labeled Lupus.] **12 Now therefore, take for yourselves twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one man from every tribe. 13 And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, *that* the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off, the waters that come down from upstream, and they shall stand as a heap.”**

**14 So it was, when the people set out from their camp to cross over the Jordan, with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people, 15 and as those who bore the ark came to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests who bore the ark dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest),** [Typically, the Jordan was about 20 yards across and was not a raging river. However, since it was spring (about April), the snow from the mountains was melting and filling the Jordan to overflowing. This was time to harvest barley in Canaan. God was bringing them into the Promised Land at a harvest time when the fields would be **full** and abundant and the Israelites would be provided for in a new land.] **16 that the waters which came down from upstream stood still, and rose in a heap very far away at Adam, the city that *is* beside Zaretan** [15-20 miles away]. **So the waters that went down into the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea** [the Dead Sea], **failed, and were cut off; and the people crossed over opposite Jericho.** [Many commentators suppose that God could have used natural occurrences to dam up the water. Around Adam, current day Telled-Damiyeh (15-20 miles away), there are many steep, rocky cliffs. Throughout the centuries, earthquakes have happened and caused the water to stop flowing. In the 1920’s it was recorded that this happened and the water stopped for 21 hours. It is important to remember that God uses **whatever**

He chooses to gain our attention or to achieve His purposes. If He used nature, it was in His timing and under His authority. Tell the story of failure and choosing to step when God has not called me to step. Stone representation labeled by “not waiting.” **What kind of “stones” do you have in your life?**] **17** **Then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel crossed over on dry ground, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan.** [The riverbed was instantly dry—no slogging through muddy or marshy areas—they walked through on dry ground. This is significant because it shows a supernatural aspect to the drying up. With just a natural occurrence, the water could not have dried instantly. The Israelites were to keep about half a mile between themselves and the Ark (the Ark was north of them and the people crossed south of the Ark. The Israelites would have spanned several miles for all the people to cross and they would have moved quickly. **David Guzik: We usually want the river to be dry before we even make a step; but God was truly calling Israel to step out in faith.**]

## Joshua 4

### The Memorial Stones

**1 And it came to pass, when all the people had completely crossed over the Jordan** [A couple of million people crossed—and the priests stood there the entire time holding a very heavy object!], **that the LORD spoke to Joshua, saying: 2 “Take for yourselves twelve men from the people, one man from every tribe** [This was showing that word would spread through the entire nation and that the details of what God did through this crossing would be heard by all tribes], **3 and command them, saying, ‘Take for yourselves twelve stones from here, out of the midst of the Jordan, from the place where the priests’ feet stood firm. You shall carry them over with you and leave them in the lodging place where you lodge tonight.’”**

**4 Then Joshua called the twelve men whom he had appointed from the children of Israel, one man from every tribe; 5 and Joshua said to them: “Cross over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of the Jordan, and each one of you take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, 6 that this may be a sign among you when your children ask in time to come, saying, ‘What do these stones *mean* to you?’ 7 Then you shall answer them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it crossed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. And these stones shall be for a memorial to the children of Israel forever.”**

**Stone** memorials were common in the OT. They served as a visual testament that the Israelites could point their children to and recount the ways that God had been faithful to them (“this is what God did”).

**What are ‘stones’ in your own life that you are memorializing? What God has accomplished through your failure or just that you failed?**

**Are your stones, ‘memorial stones,’ or, ‘stumbling stones,’ for your life and those around you? Do they see you using the good and bad memorials as a crutch or do are you using those ‘stones’ to point others to God?**

**8 And the children of Israel did so, just as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones from the midst of the Jordan, as the LORD had spoken to Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them to the place where they lodged** [They established a dwelling place and they called it **Gilgal**. Abarim Publications: The name Gilgal comes from the Hebrew verb גלל (galal), meaning to roll some object on, upon, away (even whirl or dazzle). In a figurative sense it is used in ideas like to roll oneself onto the Lord, meaning to put one's trust in Him (Psalm 22:8) or to commit oneself to Him (Psalm 37:5, Proverbs 16:3). When this verb is used for physically rolling something away or somewhere else, the object is usually stones (Genesis 29:3, Joshua 10:18). After Joshua circumcised Israel, God said that He had rolled away the reproach of Egypt, and the place where He had done this was called Gilgal ever since (Joshua 5:9). The derived nouns גל (gal) and גל (gel) mean heap, wave, dung. These fragments doubled yields a noun which is identical to the name Gilgal: גלגל (gilgal), meaning wheel or a rolling thing (Isaiah 17:13) or whirlwind (Psalm 77:18). The nation of Israel was a wave, a whirlwind of people. They were going to run physically down the inhabitants of Canaan, moving upon the Promised Land. They were faithful and trusted in God and stepped into that which He had promised them.], **and laid them down there. 9 Then Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests who bore the ark of the covenant stood; and they are there to this day** [the day that this account was written down].

**Scofield: The twelve stones taken out of Jordan and erected by Joshua in Gilgal, and the twelve stones left in Jordan to be overwhelmed by its waters, are memorials marking the distinction between Christ's death under judgment in the believer's place Psalms 42:7; 88:7; John 12:31-33 and the believer's perfect deliverance from judgment.**

Parallels between Joshua and **Jesus**:

- Names mean the same: Salvation of Yahweh
- Joshua led them from the old life of disobedience to the new life of God's promise

**10 So the priests who bore the ark stood in the midst of the Jordan until everything was finished that the LORD had commanded Joshua to speak to the people, according to all that Moses had commanded Joshua; and the people hurried and crossed over. 11 Then it came to pass, when all the people had completely crossed over, that the ark of the LORD and the priests crossed over in the presence of the people.** [The priest's faith to stand their ground, courageously and patiently, while almost two million people crossed, was a testament to God's physical representation in the Ark. They stood firm and **still** in contrast to the Israelites that "hurried and crossed over."] **12 And the men of Reuben, the men of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh crossed over armed before the children of Israel, as Moses had spoken to them. 13 About forty thousand prepared for war crossed over before the LORD for battle, to the plains of Jericho** [about 70,000 were left from these tribes to guard women, children, livestock, etc.]. **14 On that day the LORD exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they had feared Moses, all the days of his life.** [Joshua was exalted as a leader and for being faithful to God. They saw that Joshua truly was like **Moses** that God's favor was upon him.]

**15 Then the LORD spoke to Joshua, saying, 16 “Command the priests who bear the ark of the Testimony to come up from the Jordan.” 17 Joshua therefore commanded the priests, saying, “Come up from the Jordan.” 18 And it came to pass, when the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD had come from the midst of the Jordan, and the soles of the priests’ feet touched the dry land, that the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and overflowed all its banks as before.** [The priests were in the middle of the deepest part of the Jordan, so they would have had to “come up” from the riverbed to reach the other side. The water returned to its normal flow (10-12 feet deep) when the priests had carried the Ark out. Parallel God and the storm story from before.]

**19 Now the people came up from the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they camped in Gilgal on the east border of Jericho. 20 And those twelve stones which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up in Gilgal. 21 Then he spoke to the children of Israel, saying: “When your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, ‘What are these stones?’ 22 then you shall let your children know, saying, ‘Israel crossed over this Jordan on dry land’; 23 for the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red Sea, which He dried up before us until we had crossed over, 24 that all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty, that you may fear the LORD your God forever.”** [The climax of the crossing event was to point His children back to **Himself** and His sufficiency, for them to know Him and make Him known as they conquered and inhabited the land He had promised and provided through their stepping out in faith.]

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. We all have “stones” in our lives: things we have done right and things where we have stepped before God’s timing and/or plan
2. As leaders in our homes, workplaces, communities and churches, we are commanded to step up and out in faith and use those stones as memorials to point others to God and His all-encompassing sufficiency for everything in life.

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. **Know** God (intimately and growing continually)
2. Make Him **known** through our “stones” of being faithful and our “stones” of disobedience (and repentance) in order to point others to Him

# The Law and the Land: The Fall of Jericho

---

So far in this series, Moses has received the Law, the Israelites rebelled in the sin of the golden calf, Moses dies, and Joshua leads the Israelites across the Jordan River into the Promised Land (Canaan).

God came to Joshua and told him to lead the children of Israel. He told Joshua to cross the Jordan. Since then, Joshua has re-implemented the Passover and circumcision (early [Joshua 5](#)). Now, Joshua is waiting on God's direction once again. Remember, the Israelites have won [zero](#) battles in Canaan so far.

Since this is an overview of the entire Bible, many stories will not be fully fleshed out—like the story of Rahab. You may be familiar with the story of the 12 spies that Moses sent out (10 were bad and two were good). The two good spies were Joshua and Caleb. Joshua remembers this military tactic and uses it again in the Promised Land.

Rahab shows up in [Joshua 2](#) when she houses the two spies that Joshua sends out. Rahab is a harlot. A harlot is an old-school word for a prostitute. [Julie, why did the spies go to Rahab's place?](#) The spies tell Rahab that she will be saved when the Israelites conquer Jericho if she will leave a scarlet cord hanging out of her window. She does—and then she waits for the [promised](#) deliverance.

## Preview: A Talking Dog

Talking dog joke

I do not want to miss the fact that there is the equivalent of a talking dog in today's text—the walls of Jericho come down and no shot is fired against them by human hands. God steps in, saves the day, and brings down the walls because Joshua and the people followed strange orders. The principle is that we must do exactly what God says. That is huge, but it is not where we are going to focus today. Today, we are going to focus on Rahab and her deliverance. Why? Because I have been a harlot—just like Rahab.

If you make an analogy between my relationship with God and a marriage partner, an applicable word to use is prostitute (prostitute is the modern-day word for harlot). Many times in the Old Testament God uses language like adultery, harlotry, and the like to describe Israel's lack of commitment to Him. I am guilty of the same kind of lack of commitment.

The big, beautiful picture in this story is that the scarlet cord Rahab hangs out her window points to the coming salvation of her and her family. I have personally trusted in Christ, so my future is secure, but the earthly deliverance has not yet occurred. Jesus will come one day and finish what He started. [David Guzik: Joshua would be a savior for Rahab, but a judge of the rest of Jericho. In the same way Jesus is a savior for those who trust Him, but a judge for those who reject Him.](#)

Primary key thought: The scarlet thread points to [salvation](#)

Secondary key thought: Do [exactly](#) what God says



## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Joshua 5:13-6:27 (Author = Joshua)

### The Commander of the Army of the LORD

**13 And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man** [notice the capital “M”] **stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand** [FYI—this is Jesus and He’s ready]. **And Joshua went to Him** [do not miss the fact that Joshua willingly walks up to Someone with a drawn sword—Joshua is either crazy or incredibly brave] **and said to Him, “Are You for us or for our adversaries?”** [Joshua creates a **false** dichotomy: friend or foe (often to military leaders, there are no other options). Another example of a false dichotomy is, “Have you stopped beating your wife?” The majority of theological arguments I have been involved in are a result of agreeing on a false dichotomy—because with God, there is often a way that is right that we have not yet considered.]

**14 So He said, “No, but as Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come.”** [Jesus basically says, “I know you are in charge of this army, but I AM in charge of a much bigger army—the entire angelic host (the army of the LORD)”]

**And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped** [only God is worthy of worship, so if this was not God, then the worship should have been rejected], **and [Joshua] said to Him, “What does my Lord say to His servant?”** [Joshua knew his place before God]

**15 Then the Commander of the LORD’s army said to Joshua, “Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy.”** [Yep, this is **God**—it sounds eerily similar to God’s conversation with Moses in the burning bush] **And Joshua did so.**

## Joshua 6

### The Destruction of Jericho

**1 Now Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went out, and none came in** [the Israelites were laying siege to it—and the inhabitants of Jericho **knew** about Israel (per **Joshua 2:8-11**)]. **2 And the LORD said to Joshua: “See! I have given Jericho into your hand, its king, and the mighty men of valor. 3 You shall march around the city, all you men of war; you shall go all around the city once** [Huh? OK]. **This you shall do six days** [OK, I see where this is going—we are going to intimidate them and then storm the castle, right?]. **4 And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark** [Here is the ark again—and if you missed Chandalee’s lesson last week, go online and listen to it]. **But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets. 5 It shall come to pass, when they make a long blast with the ram’s horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up every man straight before him.”** [What? **Have you ever been in the middle of cooking something, you are reading the recipe, and you see an ingredient or step that makes no sense? What do you do?** You better follow the step and/or add the ingredient because the author knows more than you do.]

**6 Then** [I love that Joshua gets right to work—when he gets an order, he executes it] **Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, “Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear**

seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD." 7 And he said to the people, "Proceed, and march around the city, and let him who is armed advance before the ark of the LORD."

8 So it was, when Joshua had spoken to the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the LORD advanced and blew the trumpets, and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them. 9 The armed men went before the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard came after the ark, while *the priests* continued blowing the trumpets. 10 Now Joshua had commanded the people, saying, "You shall not shout or make any noise with your voice, nor shall a word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I say to you, 'Shout!' Then you shall shout." 11 So he had the ark of the LORD circle the city, going around *it* once. Then they came into the camp and lodged in the camp.

12 And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. 13 Then seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually and blew with the trumpets. And the armed men went before them. But the rear guard came after the ark of the LORD, while *the priests* continued blowing the trumpets. 14 And the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. So they did six days. [Joshua did **exactly** what God said]

15 But it came to pass on the seventh day that they rose early, about the dawning of the day, and marched around the city seven times in the same manner. On that day only they marched around the city seven times. 16 And the seventh time it happened, when the priests blew the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people: "Shout, for the LORD has given you the city! 17 Now the city shall be doomed by the LORD to destruction, it and all who *are* in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who *are* with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. 18 And you, by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. 19 But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, *are* consecrated to the LORD; they shall come into the treasury of the LORD [David Guzik: Jericho is the "first fruits" **city** of Canaan, and so the valuables are set apart to the treasury of the LORD]."

20 So the people shouted when *the priests* blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat [insert talking dog moment]. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. 21 And they utterly destroyed all that *was* in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.

22 But Joshua had said to the two men who had spied out the country, "Go into the harlot's house, and from there bring out the woman and all that she has, as you swore to her." 23 And the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. So they brought out all her relatives and left them outside the camp of Israel. 24 But they burned the city and all that *was* in it with fire. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. 25 And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her

**father's household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.** [David Guzik: All of Jericho heard about the God of Israel (Joshua 2:8-11), but only Rahab responded positively in faith towards God with that knowledge. Rahab's faith in the **unseen** saved her and her family—just as our faith in the unseen save us today.]

**26 Then Joshua charged them at that time, saying, "Cursed be the man before the LORD who rises up and builds this city Jericho; he shall lay its foundation with his firstborn, and with his youngest he shall set up its gates."**

**27 So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout all the country.** [Ya think?]

So, why do we care about Rahab? First, for me, it is because we can relate to her—we have sinned and we are looking forward to the future fulfillment of our salvation. I love that God saved a **sinner** (imagine that)! #ThatsWhatHeDoes

Secondarily, we care about Rahab because she married a man named Salmon. Then, they had a son named Boaz. Boaz married Ruth (from the book of **Ruth**) and they had a son named Obed. Obed married and had a son named Jesse. Jesse married and had eight sons—and the youngest was named David. You see, David was an ancestor of Jesus—and so was Rahab.

Salmon (& Rahab) → Boaz (& Ruth) → Obed → Jesse → David → . . . → **Jesus**

**Hebrews 11** (the faith chapter) gives more airtime to Rahab (**Hebrews 11:30-31**) than it does to David and Solomon. James uses Rahab as an example of someone who is justified by her works (i.e., her works showed/illustrated that her faith was real in **James 2:24-26**). What did she do? She hid God's men. She did not preach a sermon, live as a missionary, or give great amounts of money. She simply used what she had for God and His purposes. God is calling us to do the same today.

**David Guzik: Consider that she was a pagan sinner in a city and culture wholly given over to the worship of false gods and immorality, with no previous contact with the word of God or the things of God. What is your excuse?**

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. Yesterday is not important because you can only use **today** (if you have been a prostitute, today is more important than the past in God's economy)
2. Use what you have for God and watch God work with it (He can do more than you think)
3. Never underestimate what God can do with someone that appears to be unsavable/unusable (Can you imagine a less likely candidate to be a trophy of God's mercy and grace than Rahab?)

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Your past does not limit what God can do with your today (or your tomorrows)
2. Open up your home to God's people (I bet your place is better than Rahab's place)
3. Never look down on a **Rahab** (she was mentioned eight times in Scripture—and that is more than I am mentioned)

# The Essential 100

## A Bible overview plan for 2011-2012

The Essential 100 (E100) is a systematic approach that guides readers through the big picture of the Bible. It is a carefully selected list of short Bible passages—50 from the Old Testament and 50 from the New Testament. Each testament is broken up into ten, five-week series. We will move from Old to New Testaments every five weeks. My goal is to teach three of the five lessons in every series.

The E100 in Sunday school: We will REAP (read, explain, apply, and personalize) one passage each week and finish a series every five weeks. Each lesson will include a key verse for memorization. At the end of two years, we will have covered the essential 100 passages in the Bible.

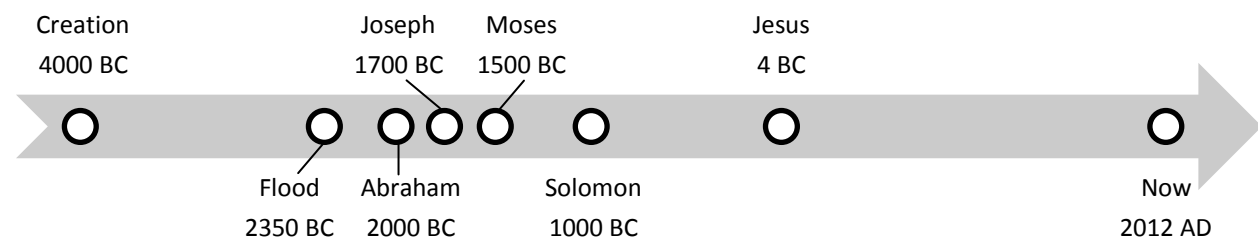
Additional information: To learn more about The E100 program and to obtain additional resources, visit [e100challenge.com](http://e100challenge.com). Our Sunday school website is [stuartheights.org/sundayschool](http://stuartheights.org/sundayschool).

## The Schedule: The Judges

This is our sixth five-week series in the Old Testament. So far, we have looked at In the Beginning, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, The Story of Joseph, Moses and the Exodus, and the Law and the Land. Now we shift to the Judges.

Date	Lesson	Key Verse(s)	Passage	Speaker
January 18	Israel's Disobedience	Judges 2:11-12	Judges 2:6-3:6	Jim Fleming
January 8	Deborah Leads Israel	Judges 4:4-5	Judges 4-5	Jim Fleming
January 15	Gideon Defeats the Midianites	Judges 7:7	Judges 6-7	Jim Fleming
January 22	Samson Defeats the Philistines	Judges 16:29-30	Judges 13-16	Barry Cole
January 29	The Story of Ruth	Ruth 4:13-17	Ruth 1-4	Lori Drake

Assuming a literal interpretation of Bible dates, the following timeline is close:



For the first 2,500 years of the world's history, the patriarchs received revelation from God passed it on orally. In 1450 BC, the Law is given. After Moses and Joshua pass off the scene, judges administer leadership for Israel. The judges bridge the leadership gap between Moses and Joshua and the kings.

# The Judges: Israel's Disobedience

---

## Preview: Endangered Species

When Joshua and the elders who outlived him died (**Judges 2:7**), a depressing cycle in Israel's history began (**Judges 2:10-19**). The Israelites turned away from God, worshiped idols, and experienced disaster. Then, in desperation, they cried to God and he raised up leaders (judges here, kings and prophets later) to save them. However, the cycle of obedience and disobedience happened repeatedly.

Key thought: **Every** generation matters (and has an impact for good or for evil)

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Judges 2:6-3:6 (Author = Samuel?)

### Judges 2

**6 And when Joshua had dismissed the people, the children of Israel went each to his own inheritance to possess the land.**

### Death of Joshua

**7 So the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua** [meaning Joshua passed the baton on to them], **who had seen all the great works of the LORD which He had done for Israel.** **8 Now Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died when he was one hundred and ten years old.** **9 And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Heres, in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash.** **10 When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel.** [Why did they not know the Lord? Perhaps because they did not see the miracles, perhaps because their parents did not tell them about Him, perhaps because they consciously rejected Him—the text does not tell us]

### Israel's Unfaithfulness

**11 Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals** [BAH-als; crivoice.org: Worship of Ba'al involved imitative magic, the performance of rituals, including sacred prostitution, which were understood to bring vitality to Ba'al in his struggle with Mot [another god]. It takes little imagination to see the connection between the human sexual act and rain watering the earth to produce fruit. . . . Contrary to how some statements in the biblical traditions are often understood, the problem that faced Israel through most of its history was not that the people totally abandoned Yahweh for the worship of Ba'al. Rather the problem was syncretism, the blending of Yahweh worship with Ba'al worship. Baal worship would continue in Israel for another **800+** years.]; **12 and they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD to anger.** **13 They forsook the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtoreths** [Baal was the male, Ashtoreth was the **female**—the plural shows up because there was a belief that there was a Baal for each area and an Ashtoreth for each area]. **14 And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel. So He delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled**

them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. **15** Wherever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for calamity, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn to them. And they were greatly distressed. [David Guzik: God's response to Israel's forsaking of Him is no surprise; He specifically promised that He would do this in the covenant He made with Israel, which was characterized by blessings for obedience and cursing for disobedience (Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 28)]

This paragraph is a **summary** of the book of the **Judges**. **16** Nevertheless, the LORD raised up judges [judges, governors, vindicators, punishers, **heroic** leaders] **who delivered** [saved, delivered, gave victory to] **them out of the hand of those who plundered them.** **17** Yet they would not listen to their judges, **but they played the harlot** [explicit unfaithfulness] **with other gods, and bowed down to them.** They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, in obeying the commandments of the LORD; they did not do so. **18** And when the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed them and harassed them. **19** And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers, by following other gods, to serve them and bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way.

**20** Then the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and He said, "Because this nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers, and has not heeded My voice, **21** I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died, **22** so that through them I may test Israel, whether they will keep the ways of the LORD, to walk in them as their fathers kept *them*, or not." **23** Therefore the LORD left those nations, without driving them out immediately; nor did He deliver them into the hand of Joshua.

## Judges 3

### The Nations Remaining in the Land

**1** Now these *are* the nations which the LORD left, that He might test Israel by them, *that is*, all who had not known any of the wars in Canaan **2** (*this was* only so that the generations of the children of Israel might be taught to know war, at least those who had not formerly known it), **3** *namely*, five lords of the Philistines, all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites who dwelt in Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal Hermon to the entrance of Hamath. **4** And they were *left*, *that He might* test Israel by them, to know whether they would obey the commandments of the LORD, which He had commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses. [Disobedience led to several hundred years of **testing**]

**5** Thus the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. **6** And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons; and they served their gods.

Generations:

Moses (mostly God) → Joshua (served God) → Elders (served God) → Children (**mixed** worship)

**David Guzik: The continual cycle makes us less and less confident of man; but more and more impressed with the mercy and grace of God.**

### **Apply (What is the point?)**

1. Passing the baton is **two**-fold (receiving and passing)
2. Passing the baton must continue **forever** (skipping a generation can have epically bad implications)

### **Personalize (What do I do with that?)**

1. Clearly identify a person who is passing you a baton and clearly identify a person to whom you are passing a baton
2. My faith will help to **define** my children's faith (for good or for bad)



# The Judges: Deborah Leads Israel

---

## Preview: Girl Power

Deborah is the only female judge in the Bible. Another hero of this story is Jael, a young woman who had the smarts and the guts to eliminate the enemy commander. Deborah says and does what God has told her (**Judges 4:6-7, 14**) and it has a powerful effect. A theme in this passage is that courage is not limited by **gender**.

Key thought: Heroes encourage others to obey God

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Judges 4-5 (Author = Samuel?)

### Judges 4

#### Deborah

**1 When Ehud** [Othniel was the first judge, Ehud was the second judge, Shamgar (not shamwow) was the third judge, and Deborah was the **fourth** judge] **was dead, the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD. 2 So the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth Hagoyim. 3 And the children of Israel cried out to the LORD; for Jabin had nine hundred chariots of iron** [the Old Testament equivalent of **stealth** bombers], **and for twenty years he had harshly oppressed the children of Israel.**

**4 Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at that time. 5 And she would sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the mountains of Ephraim. And the children of Israel came up to her for judgment** [David Guzik: The Bible tells us of several other prophetesses: Miriam (Exodus 15:20), Huldah (2 Kings 22:14), Anna (Luke 2:36), and Philip's four daughters (Acts 21:8-9)]. **6 Then she sent and called for Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, "Has not the LORD God of Israel commanded, 'Go and deploy troops at Mount Tabor; take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and of the sons of Zebulun; 7 and against you I will deploy Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude at the River Kishon; and I will deliver him into your hand'?"** [Deborah is challenging this general of Israel (Barak) to do what God has already told him to do. Notice that she is always **respectful** and always encouraging him to **do** what God told him to do. David Guzik: Often it is assumed that Deborah's rise to authority was because of a lack of male leadership. Barak doesn't seem to be all he should be, yet we have no indication that he failed to do something God told him to do in taking leadership.]

**8 And Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go!"** [Can everyone clearly see that we need a hero here?]

**9 So she said, "I will surely go with you; nevertheless there will be no glory for you in the journey you are taking, for the LORD will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman." Then Deborah arose and went**

with Barak to Kedesh. **10** And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali [two of the twelve tribes] to Kedesh; he went up with ten thousand men under his command, and Deborah went up with him.

**11** Now Heber the Kenite, of the children of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses, had separated himself from the Kenites and pitched his tent near the terebinth tree at Zaanaim, which *is* beside Kedesh.

**12** And they reported to Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor. **13** So Sisera gathered together all his chariots, nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people who *were* with him, from Harosheth Hagoyim to the River Kishon.

**14** Then Deborah said to Barak, “Up! For this *is* the day in which the LORD has delivered Sisera into your hand. Has not the LORD gone out before you?” [Encouraging him to obey God] So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him. **15** And the LORD routed Sisera and all *his* chariots and all *his* army with the edge of the sword before Barak; and Sisera alighted from *his* chariot and fled away on foot. **16** But Barak pursued the chariots and the army as far as Harosheth Hagoyim, and all the army of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; not a man was left. [So how did Israel defeat those chariots of iron? Chariots of iron are heavy and do not work well in the mud. God sent lots and lots of **rain**.]

**17** However, Sisera had fled away on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite; for *there was* peace between Jabin king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. **18** And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said to him, “Turn aside, my lord, turn aside to me; do not fear.” And when he had turned aside with her into the tent, she covered him with a blanket.

**19** Then he said to her, “Please give me a little water to drink, for I am thirsty.” So she opened a jug of milk, gave him a drink, and covered him. **20** And he said to her, “Stand at the door of the tent, and if any man comes and inquires of you, and says, ‘Is there any man here?’ you shall say, ‘No.’”

**21** Then Jael, Heber’s wife, took a tent peg and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple, and it went down into the ground; for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died [Duh! David Guzik: In those days, customarily it was the job of the women to set up the tents; it shouldn't surprise us that Jael was handy with a tent peg.]. **22** And then, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said to him, “Come, I will show you the man whom you seek.” And when he went into her *tent*, there lay Sisera, dead with the peg in his temple.

David Guzik: Of course, there is no defending the treachery of Jael. She broke her promise to Sisera and killed a man that her own husband had made peace with. But, God even used her treachery to accomplish His purposes. Surely, Sisera deserved to die; he fought against God’s people. . . . But this does not excuse Jael’s personal sin. She will have to answer for it. The lesson for us is important—God can make even the **evil** of man serve His purposes: Surely the wrath of man shall praise You (Psalm 76:10a). Yet, that *never* diminishes the personal responsibility of the one doing the evil. Judas’ betrayal of Jesus served the eternal purpose of God, yet he still had to answer for that evil deed.

**23 So on that day God subdued Jabin king of Canaan in the presence of the children of Israel. 24 And the hand of the children of Israel grew stronger and stronger against Jabin king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.**

## Judges 5

### The Song of Deborah

**1 Then Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam sang on that day, saying:** [a great song that you should read a few times this week]

**2 “When leaders lead in Israel,  
When the people willingly offer themselves,  
Bless the LORD!**

**3 “Hear, O kings! Give ear, O princes!  
I, *even* I, will sing to the LORD;  
I will sing praise to the LORD God of Israel.**

**4 “LORD, when You went out from Seir,  
When You marched from the field of Edom,  
The earth trembled and the heavens  
poured,  
The clouds also poured water;**

**5 The mountains gushed before the LORD,  
This Sinai, before the LORD God of Israel.**

**6 “In the days of Shamgar, son of Anath,  
In the days of Jael,  
The highways were deserted,  
And the travelers walked along the byways.**

**7 Village life ceased, it ceased in Israel,  
Until I, Deborah, arose,  
Arose a mother in Israel.**

**8 They chose new gods;  
Then *there was* war in the gates;  
Not a shield or spear was seen among forty  
thousand in Israel.**

**9 My heart *is* with the rulers of Israel  
Who offered themselves willingly with the  
people.  
Bless the LORD!**

**10 “Speak, you who ride on white donkeys,  
Who sit in judges’ attire,  
And who walk along the road.**

**11 Far from the noise of the archers, among  
the watering places,  
There they shall recount the righteous acts  
of the LORD,  
The righteous acts *for* His villagers in Israel;  
Then the people of the LORD shall go down  
to the gates.**

**12 “Awake, awake, Deborah!  
Awake, awake, sing a song!  
Arise, Barak, and lead your captives away,  
O son of Abinoam!**

**13 “Then the survivors came down, the people  
against the nobles;  
The LORD came down for me against the  
mighty.**

**14 From Ephraim *were* those whose roots  
were in Amalek.  
After you, Benjamin, with your peoples,  
From Machir rulers came down,  
And from Zebulun those who bear the  
recruiter’s staff.**

**15 And the princes of Issachar *were* with  
Deborah;  
As Issachar, so *was* Barak  
Sent into the valley under his command;**

Among the divisions of Reuben  
There were great resolves of heart.

16 Why did you sit among the sheepfolds,  
To hear the pipings for the flocks?  
The divisions of Reuben have great  
searchings of heart.

17 Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan,  
And why did Dan remain on ships?  
Asher continued at the seashore,  
And stayed by his inlets.

18 Zebulun is a people *who* jeopardized their  
lives to the point of death,  
Naphtali also, on the heights of the  
battlefield.

19 "The kings came *and* fought,  
Then the kings of Canaan fought  
In Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo;  
They took no spoils of silver.

20 They fought from the heavens;  
The stars from their courses fought against  
Sisera.

21 The torrent of Kishon swept them away,  
That ancient torrent, the torrent of Kishon.  
O my soul, march on in strength!

22 Then the horses' hooves pounded,  
The galloping, galloping of his steeds.

23 'Curse Meroz,' said the angel of the LORD,  
'Curse its inhabitants bitterly,  
Because they did not come to the help of  
the LORD,  
To the help of the LORD against the mighty.'  
So the land had rest for forty years.

24 "Most blessed among women is Jael,  
The wife of Heber the Kenite;  
Blessed is she among women in tents.

25 He asked for water, she gave milk;  
She brought out cream in a lordly bowl.

26 She stretched her hand to the tent peg,  
Her right hand to the workmen's hammer;  
She pounded Sisera, she pierced his head,  
She split and struck through his temple.

27 At her feet he sank, he fell, he lay still;  
At her feet he sank, he fell;  
Where he sank, there he fell dead.

28 "The mother of Sisera looked through the  
window,  
And cried out through the lattice,  
'Why is his chariot so long in coming?  
Why tarries the clatter of his chariots?'

29 Her wisest ladies answered her,  
Yes, she answered herself,

30 'Are they not finding and dividing the spoil:  
To every man a girl or two;  
For Sisera, plunder of dyed garments,  
Plunder of garments embroidered and dyed,  
Two pieces of dyed embroidery for the neck  
of the looter?'

31 "Thus let all Your enemies perish, O LORD!  
But *let* those who love Him *be* like the sun  
When it comes out in full strength."

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. Courage is not limited by gender
2. Heroes encourage others to obey God
3. God will use **anything** to accomplish His plan

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. God wants to use everyone
2. **Who am I encouraging to obey God?**
3. Recognize God's hand at all times

# The Judges: Gideon Defeats the Midianites

---

## Review: Rollercoaster Religion and Casserole Creeds

Last week we looked at both the eclectic and cyclical nature of Israel's behavior during the time of the judges. **Judges 2:16-19** summarizes the pattern that we will see repeatedly in **Judges: 16 Nevertheless, the LORD raised up judges** [judges, governors, vindicators, punishers, **heroic** leaders] **who delivered** [saved, delivered, gave victory to] **them out of the hand of those who plundered them. 17 Yet they would not listen to their judges, but they played the harlot** [explicit unfaithfulness] **with other gods, and bowed down to them. They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, in obeying the commandments of the LORD; they did not do so. 18 And when the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed them and harassed them. 19 And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers, by following other gods, to serve them and bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way.**

## Preview: How Can I Be Sure?

In today's lesson, we meet Gideon—an initially reluctant hero. Gideon is famous for his request for **signs** from God to confirm God's message (some things never change). Gideon is like the Colombo of the Old Testament judges—constantly asking God questions and wanting one more thing from Him. The real hero of the story of Gideon, though, is (as usual) God. His generous mercy, His unrelenting love, and His beautiful longsuffering steal the show in this passage.

Key thought: Even though He uses men to accomplish His purpose, **God** is the hero of the Bible

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Judges 6-7 (Author = Samuel?)

### Judges 6

#### Midianites Oppress Israel

**1 Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD delivered** [gave, put, set] **them into the hand of Midian for seven years, 2 and the hand of Midian prevailed** [was strong] **against Israel. Because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made for themselves the dens, the caves, and the strongholds which are in the mountains. 3 So it was, whenever Israel had sown, Midianites would come up; also Amalekites and the people of the East would come up against them. 4 Then they would encamp against them and destroy the produce of the earth as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep nor ox nor donkey. 5 For they would come up with their livestock and their tents, coming in as numerous as locusts; both they and their camels were without number; and they would enter the land to destroy** [spoil, ruin, morally pervert, corrupt] **it. 6 So Israel was greatly impoverished** [laid low—the opposite being high and proud (the implication is that they were **humbled**)] **because of the Midianites, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD** [David Guzik: Even through Israel cried

out to the Lord, they didn't really know that *they* were the problem. Crying out to God for help does not always mean we have recognized our sin or repented.].

**7** And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD because of the Midianites, **8** that the LORD sent a prophet [Who was this prophet? Are you willing to go unaccredited in God's big, beautiful plan of redemption?] to the children of Israel, who said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I brought you up from Egypt and brought you out of the house of bondage; **9** and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of all who oppressed you, and drove them out before you and gave you their land. **10** Also I said to you, "I *am* the LORD your God; do not fear the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell." But you have not obeyed My voice.'" [Notice how an unnamed prophet shows up in the period of the judges. Note: while academics and teachers attempt to draw clean lines between the periods of the patriarchs, the judges, the kings, and the prophets, the line is actually very fuzzy.]

### Gideon

**11** Now the Angel of the LORD [Jesus—this is another theophany (an Old Testament appearance of Jesus)] came and sat under the terebinth tree which *was* in Ophrah, which *belonged* to Joash the Abiezrite [one of Manasseh's sons—firmly Jewish], while his son Gideon [hewer—meaning one who cuts things down] threshed wheat in the winepress, in order to hide *it* from the Midianites [Picture this scene in your mind and ask, "Does this look like a hero?"]. **12** And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him, and said to him, "The LORD *is* with you, you mighty [strong] man of valor [literally, 'you strong army man'; I love how God believes in us before we believe in ourselves—perspective will do that]!"

**13** Gideon said to Him, "O my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? [Question/request #1] And where *are* all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, 'Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?' [Question/request #2] But now the LORD has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites [Who really had forsaken whom?]."

**14** Then the LORD turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you? [This question implies Gideon has been previously called and has not yet risen to the occasion—similar to the account of Deborah and Barak last week]"

**15** So he [Gideon] said to Him, "O my Lord, how can I save Israel? [Question/request #3] Indeed my clan [family; literally, it means, 'mine (of the thousands of families)'] *is* the weakest in Manasseh [tribe], and I *am* the least in my father's house." [These objections remind me of Moses' objections to the Angel of the Lord back in Exodus]

**16** And the LORD said to him, "Surely I will be with you [this sounds like God's response to Moses—God is wholly and completely consistent], and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man."

**17** Then he said to Him, "If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign [sign, signal, token, ensign, standard, miracle, proof; God's Word is proof enough] that it is You who talk with me [Question/request #4]. **18** Do not depart from here, I pray, until I come to You and bring out my offering and set *it* before You [Question/request #5]."

And He said, "I will wait until you come back."

**19** So Gideon went in and prepared a young goat, and unleavened bread from an ephah of flour. The meat he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot; and he brought *them* out to Him under the terebinth tree and presented *them*. **20** The Angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay *them* on this rock, and pour out the broth." And he did so [finally, obedience without question!].

**21** Then the Angel of the LORD put out the end of the staff that *was* in His hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened bread; and fire rose out of the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. And the Angel of the LORD departed out of his sight. [Boom—there is your proof!]

**22** Now Gideon perceived that He *was* the Angel of the LORD [Ya' think?]. So Gideon said, "Alas, O Lord GOD! For I have seen the Angel of the LORD face to face."

**23** Then the LORD said to him, "Peace *be* with you; do not fear, you shall not die." [Remember that most people's first reaction to seeing either an angel or God in the Old Testament is extreme fear. Gideon did not experience that fear first—he experienced that last, so now he needs the encouragement not to fear.] **24** So Gideon built an altar there to the LORD, and called it The-LORD-Is-Peace. To this day [the day that **Judges** was written] it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

**25** Now it came to pass the same night that the LORD said to him, "Take your father's young bull, the second bull of seven years old, and tear down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the wooden image [many altars erected to false gods had sacred trees that were nearby that had inscriptions in them] that *is* beside it; **26** and build an altar to the LORD your God on top of this rock in the proper arrangement, and take the second bull and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the image which you shall cut down." [I think Gideon wanted to test God. I also think God wanted to test Gideon. God tells Gideon to throw out the **casserole**. This is a beautiful example of the 'put-off-put-on' principle taught in **Ephesians 4:20-24**] **27** So Gideon took ten men from among his servants and did as the LORD had said to him [no questions]. But because he feared his father's household and the men of the city too much to do *it* by day, he did *it* by night [not yet heroic, but obedient nonetheless].

### Gideon Destroys the Altar of Baal

**28** And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, there was the altar of Baal, torn down; and the wooden image that *was* beside it was cut down, and the second bull was being offered on the altar *which had been* built. **29** So they said to one another, "Who has done this thing?" And when they had inquired and asked, they said, "Gideon the son of Joash has done this thing." [How did they know this?] **30** Then the men of the city said to Joash, "Bring out your son, that he may die, because he has torn down the altar of Baal, and because he has cut down the wooden image that *was* beside it."

**31** But Joash said to all who stood against him, "Would you plead for Baal? Would you save him? Let the one who would plead for him be put to death by morning! If he *is* a god, let him plead for himself, because his altar has been torn down! [Finally, a wise perspective about gods]" **32** Therefore on that



day he called him [Gideon] Jerubbaal, saying, “Let Baal plead against him, because he has torn down his altar.”

**33** Then all the Midianites and Amalekites, the people of the East, gathered together; and they crossed over and encamped in the Valley of Jezreel. **34** But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon [this is key—when the man of God is filled with the Spirit of God and intends to do the will of God]; then he blew the trumpet, and the Abiezrites gathered behind him. **35** And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, who also gathered behind him. He also sent messengers to Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali [other tribes in Israel]; and they came up to meet them [Gideon is looking more and more like a hero. Small steps of obedience will **strengthen** your faith.].

### The Sign of the Fleece

**36** So Gideon said to God, “If You will save Israel by my hand as You have said — **37** look, I shall put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; if there is dew on the fleece only, and *it is dry* on all the ground, then I shall know that You will save Israel by my hand, as You have said.” [Question/request #6] **38** And it was so. When he rose early the next morning and squeezed the fleece together, he wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowlful of water. **39** Then Gideon said to God, “Do not be angry with me, but let me speak just once more [Colombo behavior—Gideon had previously told God that the first test would be enough, but Gideon went back on his word]: Let me test, I pray, just once more with the fleece; let it now be dry only on the fleece, but on all the ground let there be dew.” [Question/request #7] **40** And God did so that night. It was dry on the fleece only, but there was dew on all the ground. [God responded to all seven of Gideon’s questions/requests. This is the last thing Gideon asked of God.]

## Judges 7

### Gideon’s Valiant Three Hundred

**1** Then Jerubbaal (that *is*, Gideon) and all the people who *were* with him [we find out in a minute that 32,000 men came] rose early and encamped beside the well of Harod, so that the camp of the Midianites [we know from **Judges 8** that there were 135,000 enemies present] was on the north side of them by the hill of Moreh in the valley.

**2** And the LORD said to Gideon, “The people who *are* with you *are* too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, ‘My own hand has saved me.’ **3** Now therefore, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, ‘Whoever *is* fearful and afraid [trembling], let him turn and depart at once from Mount Gilead.’” And twenty-two thousand of the people returned, and ten thousand remained [69% of those that came went home].

**4** But the LORD said to Gideon, “The people *are* still *too* many [Sometimes God’s mathematical analysis does not make sense to us]; bring them down to the water, and I will test them for you there. Then it will be, *that* of whom I say to you, ‘This one shall go with you,’ the same shall go with you; and of whomever I say to you, ‘This one shall not go with you,’ the same shall not go.” **5** So he brought the people down to the water [obedience without question]. And the LORD said to Gideon, “Everyone who laps from the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set apart by himself; likewise everyone who gets down on his knees to drink.” **6** And the number of those who lapped, *putting* their hand to

their mouth, was three hundred men; but all the rest of the people got down on their knees to drink water. [Confession time: I would have put my hand to my mouth—what does that tell you about these men?] **7 Then the LORD said to Gideon, “By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you** [God did not use the 99%, He used the **1%**], **and deliver the Midianites into your hand. Let all the other people go, every man to his place.” 8 So the people took provisions and their trumpets in their hands. And he sent away all the rest of Israel, every man to his tent, and retained those three hundred men. Now the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.**

**9 It happened on the same night that the LORD said to him, “Arise, go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hand. 10 But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah** [bough—like a branch] **your servant, 11 and you shall hear what they say; and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp.” Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outpost of the armed men who were in the camp** [meaning Gideon was still **afraid**]. **12 Now the Midianites and Amalekites, all the people of the East, were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude.** [Camels were important because camels allowed the soldiers to travel quickly across the battlefield and Israel had no camels]

**13 And when Gideon had come, there was a man telling a dream to his companion. He said, “I have had a dream: To my surprise, a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian; it came to a tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned, and the tent collapsed.”**

**14 Then his companion answered and said, “This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel! Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp.”** [David Guzik: Barley bread was the bread of the very poor; the vision means that the camp of the Midianites will be knocked over by a humble nobody]

**15 And so it was, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, that he worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel, and said, “Arise, for the LORD has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand.” 16 Then he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet** [a ram’s horn—I personally would have preferred a sword or a shield or a spear] **into every man’s hand, with empty pitchers, and torches inside the pitchers. 17 And he said to them, “Look at me and do likewise** [this is 100% pure **leadership**—do what I do]; **watch, and when I come to the edge of the camp you shall do as I do: 18 When I blow the trumpet, I and all who are with me, then you also blow the trumpets on every side of the whole camp, and say, ‘The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!’”** [Psalm 20:7: Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; But we will remember the name of the LORD our God. David Guzik: There is no specific mention that God gave Gideon this plan through supernatural revelation. Yet, because Gideon is a Spirit-filled man (Judges 6:34), the supernatural can operate very naturally in his life.]

**19 So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outpost of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just as they had posted the watch; and they blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers that were in their hands. 20 Then the three companies blew the trumpets and**

broke the pitchers—they held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands for blowing—and they cried, “The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!” **21** And every man stood in his place all around the camp; and the whole army ran and cried out and fled. **22** When the three hundred blew the trumpets, the LORD set every man’s sword against his companion throughout the whole camp [God caused Israel’s enemies to **fight** themselves]; and the army fled to Beth Acacia, toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel Meholah, by Tabbath.

**23** And the men of Israel gathered together from Naphtali, Asher, and all Manasseh, and pursued the Midianites.

**24** Then Gideon sent messengers throughout all the mountains of Ephraim, saying, “Come down against the Midianites, and seize from them the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan.” Then all the men of Ephraim gathered together and seized the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan. **25** And they captured two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they killed at the winepress of Zeeb. They pursued Midian and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side of the Jordan. [David Guzik: God did the great work through this small number of men; but once the great work had begun, He wanted as many as who could to get involved in the work]

The rest of the story is that Gideon pursues the remainder of Israel’s enemies 150 miles and kills them all too.

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. God can handle all of your **questions**, but at the end of the day, He wants your obedience
2. God can handle all of your **fears**, but at the end of the day, He wants your obedience
3. God is the real hero and will use whatever is in your **hand** to fulfill His purposes

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Question, but obey
2. Fear, but obey
3. Use what is in your hand for God

# The Judges: Samson Defeats the Philistines

---

## Preview: Samson, Samson, Samson . . .

**Hebrews 11:1, 32-33:** **1** Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. . . . **32** And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets: **33** who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions

Lesson outline: What Samson had, what Samson did, what Samson lost, and what Samson learned

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Judges 13-16 (Author = Samuel?)

Keep in mind while reading the passage that God desires to free the Israelites from the bondage of the Philistines. He will do this even in spite of Samson's sin.

## Judges 13

### The Birth of Samson

**1** Again the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.

**2** Now there was a certain man from Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren and had no children. **3** And the Angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, "Indeed now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son. **4** Now therefore, please be careful not to drink wine or *similar* drink, and not to eat anything unclean. **5** For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines."

**6** So the woman came and told her husband, saying, "A Man of God came to me, and His countenance was like the countenance of the Angel of God, very awesome; but I did not ask Him where He was from, and He did not tell me His name. **7** And He said to me, 'Behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. Now drink no wine or *similar* drink, nor eat anything unclean, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb to the day of his death.'" [This was a lifetime vow of consecration that was not his decision]

**8** Then Manoah prayed to the LORD, and said, "O my Lord, please let the Man of God whom You sent come to us again and teach us what we shall do for the child who will be born."

**9** And God listened to the voice of Manoah, and the Angel of God came to the woman again as she was sitting in the field; but Manoah her husband was not with her. **10** Then the woman ran in haste and told her husband, and said to him, "Look, the Man who came to me the *other* day has just now appeared to me!"

**11** So Manoah arose and followed his wife. When he came to the Man, he said to Him, “Are You the Man who spoke to this woman?”

And He said, “I am.”

**12** Manoah said, “Now let Your words come to *pass*! What will be the boy’s rule of life, and his work?”

**13** So the Angel of the LORD said to Manoah, “Of all that I said to the woman let her be careful. **14** She may not eat anything that comes from the vine, nor may she drink wine or *similar* drink, nor eat anything unclean. All that I commanded her let her observe.”

**15** Then Manoah said to the Angel of the LORD, “Please let us detain You, and we will prepare a young goat for You.”

**16** And the Angel of the LORD said to Manoah, “Though you detain Me, I will not eat your food. But if you offer a burnt offering, you must offer it to the LORD.” (For Manoah did not know He *was* the Angel of the LORD.)

**17** Then Manoah said to the Angel of the LORD, “What *is* Your name, that when Your words come to *pass* we may honor You?”

**18** And the Angel of the LORD said to him, “Why do you ask My name, seeing it *is* wonderful?”

**19** So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering, and offered it upon the rock to the LORD. And He did a wondrous thing while Manoah and his wife looked on— **20** it happened as the flame went up toward heaven from the altar—the Angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar! When Manoah and his wife saw *this*, they fell on their faces to the ground. **21** When the Angel of the LORD appeared no more to Manoah and his wife, then Manoah knew that He *was* the Angel of the LORD.

**22** And Manoah said to his wife, “We shall surely die, because we have seen God!”

**23** But his wife said to him, “If the LORD had desired to kill us, He would not have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering from our hands, nor would He have shown us all these *things*, nor would He have told us *such things* as these at this time.”

**24** So the woman bore a son and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the LORD blessed him. **25** And the Spirit of the LORD began to move upon him at Mahaneh Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.

Samson: The Early Years (from the [International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#))

**Nazarite: a consecrated one**

**(1) the strictest abstinence from wine and from every product of the vine;**

**(2) the keeping of the hair uncut and the beard untouched by a razor;**

(3) the prohibition to touch a dead body; and

(4) prohibition of unclean food (Judges 13:5-7; Numbers 6, 1 Samuel 1:11)

### What Samson Had

Samson had a **believing** mother with faith (Judges 13:6). Samson had a **godly** father with fear or respect (Judges 13:19). Gideon's father built altars to Baal. Samson's environment was a godly environment.

## Judges 14

### Samson's Philistine Wife

**1 Now Samson went down to Timnah** [a Philistine-controlled land], **and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines.** **2 So he went up and told his father and mother, saying, "I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore, get her for me as a wife."**

**3 Then his father and mother said to him, "Is there no woman among the daughters of your brethren [your tribe/nationality], or among all my people, that you must go and get a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?"**

**And Samson said to his father, "Get her for me, for she pleases me well."** [Samson has not yet broken his Nazarite vow]

**4 But his father and mother did not know that it was of the LORD—that He was seeking an occasion to move against the Philistines. For at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.**

**5 So Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother, and came to the vineyards of Timnah.**

**Now to his surprise, a young lion came roaring against him.** **6 And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he tore the lion apart as one would have torn apart a young goat, though he had nothing in his hand. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done.** [Samson is walking down his own path and he has now broken his vow]

**7 Then he went down and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well.** **8 After some time, when he returned to get her, he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion. And behold, a swarm of bees and honey were in the carcass of the lion.** **9 He took some of it in his hands and went along, eating. When he came to his father and mother, he gave some to them, and they also ate. But he did not tell them that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion.** [Samson violates his vow again]

**10 So his father went down to the woman. And Samson gave a feast** [a drinking feast—a banquet] **there, for young men used to do so.** **11 And it happened, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him.** [Samson is getting further and further off the path because he is now hanging out with the uncircumcised Philistines]

**12** Then Samson said to them, "Let me pose a riddle to you. If you can correctly solve and explain it to me within the seven days of the feast, then I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing. **13** But if you cannot explain *it* to me, then you shall give me thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing."

And they said to him, "Pose your riddle, that we may hear it."

**14** So he said to them:

"Out of the eater came something to eat,  
And out of the strong came something sweet."

Now for three days they could not explain the riddle.

**15** But it came to pass on the seventh day that they said to Samson's wife, "Entice your husband, that he may explain the riddle to us, or else we will burn you and your father's house with fire. Have you invited us in order to take what is ours? *Is that* not so?"

**16** Then Samson's wife wept on him, and said, "You only hate me! You do not love me! You have posed a riddle to the sons of my people, but you have not explained *it* to me."

And he said to her, "Look, I have not explained *it* to my father or my mother; so should I explain *it* to you?" **17** Now she had wept on him the seven days while their feast lasted. And it happened on the seventh day that he told her, because she pressed him so much. Then she explained the riddle to the sons of her people. **18** So the men of the city said to him on the seventh day before the sun went down:

"What *is* sweeter than honey?  
And what *is* stronger than a lion?"

And he said to them:

"If you had not plowed with my heifer,  
You would not have solved my riddle!"

**19** Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon him mightily, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty of their men, took their apparel, and gave the changes *of clothing* to those who had explained the riddle. So his anger was aroused, and he went back up to his father's house. **20** And Samson's wife was *given* to his companion, who had been his best man.

## Judges 15

### Samson Defeats the Philistines

**1** After a while, in the time of wheat harvest, it happened that Samson visited his wife with a young goat. And he said, "Let me go in to my wife, into *her* room." But her father would not permit him to go in.



**2** Her father said, "I really thought that you thoroughly hated her; therefore I gave her to your companion. Is not her younger sister better than she? Please, take her instead."

**3** And Samson said to them, "This time I shall be blameless regarding the Philistines if I harm them!"

[this is a very poor attempt at self-justification] **4** Then Samson went and caught three hundred foxes;

and he took torches, turned *the foxes* tail to tail, and put a torch between each pair of tails. **5** When he had set the torches on fire, he let *the foxes* go into the standing grain of the Philistines, and burned up both the shocks and the standing grain, as well as the vineyards *and* olive groves.

**6** Then the Philistines said, "Who has done this?"

And they answered, "Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he has taken his wife and given her to his companion." So the Philistines came up and burned her and her father with fire.

**7** Samson said to them, "Since you would do a thing like this, I will surely take revenge on you, and after that I will cease." **8** So he attacked them hip and thigh with a great slaughter; then he went down and dwelt in the cleft of the rock of Etam.

**9** Now the Philistines went up, encamped in Judah, and deployed themselves against Lehi. **10** And the men of Judah said, "Why have you come up against us?"

So they answered, "We have come up to arrest Samson, to do to him as he has done to us."

**11** Then three thousand men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Etam, and said to Samson, "Do you not know that the Philistines rule over us? What *is* this you have done to us?"

And he said to them, "As they did to me, so I have done to them."

**12** But they said to him, "We have come down to arrest you, that we may deliver you into the hand of the Philistines."

Then Samson said to them, "Swear to me that you will not kill me yourselves."

**13** So they spoke to him, saying, "No, but we will tie you securely and deliver you into their hand; but we will surely not kill you." And they bound him with two new ropes and brought him up from the rock.

**14** When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting against him. Then the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him; and the ropes that *were* on his arms became like flax that is burned with fire, and his bonds broke loose from his hands. **15** He found a fresh jawbone of a donkey [another dead thing], reached out his hand and took it, and killed a thousand men with it. **16** Then Samson said:

"With the jawbone of a donkey,  
Heaps upon heaps,  
With the jawbone of a donkey  
I have slain a thousand men!"

**17 And so it was, when he had finished speaking, that he threw the jawbone from his hand, and called that place Ramath Lehi.**

**18 Then he became very thirsty; so he cried out to the LORD** [up to this point, we have no indication that Samson has ever made an attempt to talk to God] **and said, “You have given this great deliverance by the hand of Your servant; and now shall I die of thirst and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?”**

**19 So God split the hollow place that is in Lehi, and water came out, and he drank; and his spirit returned, and he revived. Therefore he called its name En Hakkore, which is in Lehi to this day. 20 And he judged Israel twenty years in the days of the Philistines.** [And if their leader behaved this way, imagine how poorly the people behaved]

Samson: The crazy teenage years

- He married a **non-believer**
- He touched a dead body
- He ate unclean food
- He chose the **wrong crowd**
- He gambled
- He murdered
- He stole

Samson: The angry middle-aged man

- He was betrayed
- He took **revenge**
- He murdered
- He hid
- Touched another dead body
- Killed some more
- Took credit
- Kind of **prayed**
- All this and he still led Israel

### What Samson Did

Strayed from his walk. Married a Philistine, a non-believer. Partied, alcohol involved. Touch dead bodies and ate unclean food. Gambled, killed, and stole. At least he still has his hair.

## Judges 16

### Samson and Delilah

**1 Now Samson went to Gaza** [a Philistine-controlled land] **and saw a harlot there, and went in to her. 2 When the Gazites were told, “Samson has come here!” they surrounded the place and lay in wait for him all night at the gate of the city. They were quiet all night, saying, “In the morning, when it is**

daylight, we will kill him.” **3** And Samson lay *low* till midnight; then he arose at midnight, took hold of the doors of the gate of the city and the two gateposts, pulled them up, bar and all, put *them* on his shoulders, and carried them to the top of the hill that faces Hebron.

**4** Afterward it happened that he loved a woman in the Valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah [we are not sure if Delilah was a Philistine or not, but she was able to be controlled by the Philistine lords, so the question is moot]. **5** And the lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her, “Entice him, and find out where his great strength *lies*, and by what *means* we may overpower him, that we may bind him to afflict him; and every one of us will give you eleven hundred *pieces* of silver.”

**6** So Delilah said to Samson, “Please tell me where your great strength *lies*, and with what you may be bound to afflict you.”

**7** And Samson said to her, “If they bind me with seven fresh bowstrings, not yet dried, then I shall become weak, and be like any *other* man.”

**8** So the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven fresh bowstrings, not yet dried, and she bound him with them. **9** Now *men were* lying in wait, staying with her in the room. And she said to him, “The Philistines *are* upon you, Samson!” But he broke the bowstrings as a strand of yarn breaks when it touches fire. So the secret of his strength was not known.

**10** Then Delilah said to Samson, “Look, you have mocked me and told me lies. Now, please tell me what you may be bound with.”

**11** So he said to her, “If they bind me securely with new ropes that have never been used, then I shall become weak, and be like any *other* man.”

**12** Therefore Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them, and said to him, “The Philistines *are* upon you, Samson!” And *men were* lying in wait, staying in the room. But he broke them off his arms like a thread.

**13** Delilah said to Samson, “Until now you have mocked me and told me lies. Tell me what you may be bound with.”

And he said to her, “If you weave the seven locks of my head into the web of the loom”—

**14** So she wove *it* tightly with the batten of the loom, and said to him, “The Philistines *are* upon you, Samson!” But he awoke from his sleep, and pulled out the batten and the web from the loom.

**15** Then she said to him, “How can you say, ‘I love you,’ when your heart *is* not with me? You have mocked me these three times, and have not told me where your great strength *lies*.” **16** And it came to pass, when she pestered him daily with her words and pressed him, so that his soul was vexed to death, **17** that he told her all his heart, and said to her, “No razor has ever come upon my head, for I *have been* a Nazirite to God from my mother’s womb. If I am shaven, then my strength will leave me,

**and I shall become weak, and be like any *other* man.”** [Even though Samson thought his hair was the source of his strength, God was really the source of his strength]

**18 When Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, “Come up once more, for he has told me all his heart.” So the lords of the Philistines came up to her and brought the money in their hand. 19 Then she lulled him to sleep on her knees, and called for a man and had him shave off the seven locks [braids] of his head. Then she began to torment him, and his strength left him. 20 And she said, “The Philistines *are* upon you, Samson!” So he awoke from his sleep, and said, “I will go out as before, at other times, and shake myself free!” But he did not know that the LORD had departed from him** [one of the saddest verses in the entire Bible].

**21 Then the Philistines took him and put out his eyes** [it can be argued that Samson lost his vision far sooner, though], **and brought him down to Gaza. They bound him with bronze fetters, and he became a grinder in the prison. 22 However, the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaven.**

### **Samson Dies with the Philistines**

**23 Now the lords of the Philistines gathered together to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon** [a fertility/grain god] **their god, and to rejoice. And they said:**

**“Our god has delivered into our hands  
Samson our enemy!”**

**24 When the people saw him, they praised their god; for they said:**

**“Our god has delivered into our hands our enemy,  
The destroyer of our land,  
And the one who multiplied our dead.”**

**25 So it happened, when their hearts were merry, that they said, “Call for Samson, that he may perform for us.” So they called for Samson from the prison, and he performed for them. And they stationed him between the pillars. 26 Then Samson said to the lad who held him by the hand, “Let me feel the pillars which support the temple, so that I can lean on them.” 27 Now the temple was full of men and women. All the lords of the Philistines [their leadership] *were* there—about three thousand men and women on the roof watching while Samson performed.**

**28 Then Samson called to the LORD, saying, “O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray! Strengthen me, I pray, just this once, O God, that I may with one *blow* take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes!” 29 And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars which supported the temple, and he braced himself against them, one on his right and the other on his left. 30 Then Samson said, “Let me die with the Philistines!” And he pushed with *all his* might, and the temple fell on the lords and all the people who *were* in it. So the dead that he killed at his death were more than he had killed in his life.**

**31 And his brothers and all his father's household came down and took him, and brought *him* up and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of his father Manoah. He had judged Israel twenty years.**

#### Samson: The Golden Years

- A prostitute
- Delilah
- He was **indifferent**
- He was captured and blinded
- He prayed
- He died

#### What Samson Lost

Samson throughout his life did not appear ever to lead the life you would expect from one specially chosen by God to lead Israel. The Lord focused on Samson continually blessed and strengthened him. Sampson continually lost his focus on God. In the end, Samson did not even realize that he lost the presence of the LORD (**Judges 16:20**).

#### What Samson Learned

He realized that he had misused the blessings of the Lord. He realized that he was a sinner (**Judges 16:28**). He saw that he must repent and asked for forgiveness. He learned that God can and will forgive and restore.

#### Apply (What is the point?)

1. Samson took advantage of and wasted so many blessings
2. He had a "I can do it alone" attitude
3. His best was not good enough
4. God is the hero

#### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Understand we are all sinners
2. Never "handle" things alone (recognize God's presence)
3. It is never too late for forgiveness

When finishing the lesson, my thoughts kept going back to Samson's parents: his mother and her faith in the Lord and his father who wanted a logical answer to the angel's message. I was trying to apply this to parents of today and what our children gain from mothers and fathers. Even though I feel that Samson personally succeeded through most of his life, it was covered in his personal failures. However, in the end, he came to understand his spiritual loss. With that thought, I kept going back to **Proverbs 22:6: Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.**

# The Judges: The Story of Ruth

## Preview: Our Story

Two beautiful themes are woven throughout the book of **Ruth**: one is the theological concept of **hesed**, which is the sum total of a patient, forever-enduring, loyal, loving-kindness. It is a picture of how God deals with His people—not just with love, but a love that endures through all circumstances and through all eternity. If the entire ocean were filled with God’s “positive” attributes toward His people, the word *hesed* would be like taking a spoonful of water and saying, “this is the ocean.” All the components of the ocean water would be there, but it would not do justice to vastness . . . to the brevity, depth, and magnitude of the real thing. Through the entire Old Testament, God shows this kind of loving-kindness to His people, and allows His people to show it to each other, and the book of Ruth provides us with examples of both.

The second theme is God demonstrating providence for His people, and in the book of **Ruth**, we learn that God’s providential hand is most visible when we choose obedience.

Key thought: Ruth’s story is ultimately our story

Admirable Attributes	
Boaz	Ruth
caring	loyal
protector	faithful
provider	hard working
man of prayer	respectful
generous	obedient
integrity	submissive

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Ruth 1-4 (Author = Unknown)

### Ruth 1

#### Elimelech’s Family Goes to Moab

**1 Now it came to pass, in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land** [this typically meant that Israel was under God’s judgment—this was a rebellious time for God’s people]. **And a certain man of Bethlehem** [Irony: “House of Bread”], **Judah, went to dwell in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. 2 The name of the man was Elimelech** [“My God is King”], **the name of**

his wife was Naomi [“pleasant”], and the names of his two sons were Mahlon [“sick”] and Chilion [“dying”]—Ephrathites of Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to the country of Moab [an enemy of Israel, fathered by Lot and his eldest daughter] and remained there [Elimelech: instead of dealing with sin, he relocated to avoid death. God’s providential hand is most visible when we choose obedience.]. **3 Then Elimelech, Naomi’s husband, died; and she was left, and her two sons. 4 Now they took wives of the women of Moab** [Not forbidden, but frowned upon. “Unequally yoked”: Moabites worshiped Chemosh, not Yahweh, and could not enter God’s temple. **What would your marriage look like if you could not attend church/worship together?: the name of the one was Orpah** [“stubborn”], **and the name of the other Ruth** [“friend” or “companion”]. **And they dwelt there about ten years. 5 Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died; so the woman survived her two sons and her husband.** [Ruth’s story and our story: Death → **Redeemer** → New Life]

### Naomi Returns with Ruth

**6 Then she arose with her daughters-in-law that she might return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the LORD had visited His people by giving them bread.** [The famine had ended. Naomi’s solution: Go home, return to God’s people. God’s providential hand never left Naomi. God’s providential hand is most visible when we choose obedience.] **7 Therefore she went out from the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. 8 And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, “Go, return each to her mother’s house. The LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. 9 The LORD grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband.”** [Many prayers, all prayers are for other people, all prayers are answered by the end of the book]

**So she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. 10 And they said to her, “Surely we will return with you to your people.”**

**11 But Naomi said, “Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Are there still sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? 12 Turn back, my daughters, go—for I am too old to have a husband [~50 years old]. If I should say I have hope, if I should have a husband tonight and should also bear sons, 13 would you wait for them till they were grown? Would you restrain yourselves from having husbands? No, my daughters; for it grieves me very much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me!”** [Have you ever had anger toward, or felt abandoned by, God? She is holding God ultimately responsible for her hardship. Conviction over living in Moab, sadness/grief/depression over burying husband and two sons, and ten years of living away from God’s people (out of fellowship with them). I have shaken my fists at God over much less. **Mark Driscoll: There is no suffering, and there is no affliction, and there is no weeping, no mourning, no shedding of tear or darks days for the child of God that is pointless, purposeless and without merit . . . all hardship is used by the Sovereign for His glory and for our good.]**

**14 Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her** [Ruth is loyal].



**15 And she said, “Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.”**

**16 But Ruth said:**

**“Entreat me not to leave you,  
Or to turn back from following after you;  
For wherever you go, I will go;  
And wherever you lodge, I will lodge;  
Your people *shall be* my people,  
And your God, my God.**

[This is evidence of her **conversion** from Chemosh to Jehovah. Staying in Moab would mean Christian population: 1. Ruth followed God on blind faith—no burning bush, no signs, no voice from heaven. Pros/Cons List, Con: foreign, woman, homeless, penniless, no father/husband/son, widow, not a virgin. Pro: God. God’s providential hand is most visible when we choose obedience. Ruth is faithful.]

**17 Where you die, I will die,  
And there will I be buried.  
The LORD do so to me, and more also,  
If *anything but* death parts you and me.”**

**18 When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her** [Ruth is living out the concept of *hesed*].

**19 Now the two of them went until they came to Bethlehem** [~70 miles, a 7-10 day journey; Boaz, AL is 90 miles—so close!]. **And it happened, when they had come to Bethlehem, that all the city was excited because of them; and the women said, “Is this Naomi?”** [a decade of hardship had affected Naomi’s physical appearance]

**20 But she said to them, “Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara** [“bitterness”], **for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. 21 I went out full, and the LORD has brought me home again empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has testified against me, and the Almighty has afflicted me?”** [Naomi is angry! Everything in her life is falling apart. She is confiding to God’s people—not just saying, “fine,” and pretending. She has built up a wall of bitterness and resentment that she cannot see past . . . but God can. God’s providential hand is most visible when we choose obedience.]

**22 So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. Now they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.**

## Ruth 2

### Ruth Meets Boaz

**1 There was a relative of Naomi’s husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech. His name was Boaz** [“in him is strength”]. **2 So Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, “Please let me go to the field, and glean heads of grain after him in whose sight I may find favor.”** [**Gleaning** was God’s way of

providing for the poor: the first welfare system. The edges of crops and leftovers on the ground were left for the poor to pick up. See [Deuteronomy 24:19](#)]

**And she said to her, “Go, my daughter.”**

**3 Then she left, and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers. And she happened to come to the part of the field *belonging* to Boaz, who *was* of the family of Elimelech.** [She may have faced verbal, physical, or sexual abuse before reaching Boaz’s field. Ruth was courageous.]

**4 Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to the reapers, “The LORD *be* with you!”**

**And they answered him, “The LORD bless you!”** [Boaz is caring and engaged with his employees]

**5 Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, “Whose young woman *is* this?”**

**6 So the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered and said, “It *is* the young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. 7 And she said, ‘Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.’ So she came and has continued from morning until now, though she rested a little in the house.”** [Ruth is hard working]

**8 Then Boaz said to Ruth, “You will listen, my daughter, will you not? Do not go to glean in another field, nor go from here, but stay close by my young women. 9 Let your eyes *be* on the field which they reap, and go after them. Have I not commanded the young men not to touch you? [Boaz is a protector] And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink from what the young men have drawn.”** [Boaz is a provider. **Why would Boaz show such mercy to a foreign woman?** His mother was Rahab.]

**10 So she fell on her face, bowed down to the ground, and said to him, “Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I *am* a foreigner?”** [Ruth is respectful]

**11 And Boaz answered and said to her, “It has been fully reported to me, all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and *how* you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know before. 12 The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings [see [Ruth 3:9](#)] you have come for refuge.”** [Boaz is a man of prayer. **Boaz** will eventually be the answer to his own prayer. **How often do we miss the chance to be the answer to our own prayer?** God’s providential hand is most visible when we choose obedience.]

**13 Then she said, “Let me find favor in your sight, my lord; for you have comforted me, and have spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not like one of your maidservants.”**

**14 Now Boaz said to her at mealtime, “Come here, and eat of the bread, and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar.” So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed parched *grain* to her; and she ate and was satisfied, and kept some back. 15 And when she rose up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, “Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. 16 Also let *grain* from**

the bundles fall purposely for her; leave *it* that she may glean, and do not rebuke her.” [Boaz is generous: he goes beyond the requirements of the Law. Boaz is a type of **Christ**.]

**17** So she gleaned in the field until evening, and beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. **18** Then she took *it* up and went into the city, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. So she brought out and gave to her what she had kept back after she had been satisfied.

**19** And her mother-in-law said to her, “Where have you gleaned today? And where did you work? Blessed be the one who took notice of you.”

So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked, and said, “The man’s name with whom I worked today *is* Boaz.”

**20** Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “Blessed *be* he of the LORD, who has not forsaken His kindness to the living and the dead!” And Naomi said to her, “This man *is* a relation of ours, one of our close relatives.” [These are Naomi’s first few steps out of darkness. She is realizing that God is still very much aware of her situation, now that Ruth “happened to” stumble onto a relative’s field and was shown kindness. God’s providential hand is most visible when we choose obedience. This is that moment when you feel, “not so forgotten” after all. A kinsman-redeemer was one who **bought back**. A kinsman-redeemer was someone who could use what God had blessed him with to bless others and to improve their statuses.]

**21** Ruth the Moabitess said, “He also said to me, ‘You shall stay close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest.’”

**22** And Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, “*It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, and that people do not meet you in any other field.*” **23** So she stayed close by the young women of Boaz, to glean until the end of barley harvest and wheat harvest; and she dwelt with her mother-in-law.

## Ruth 3

### Ruth’s Redemption Assured

**1** Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, “My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you? **2** Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, *is he* not our relative? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. **3** Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself, put on your *best* garment and go down to the threshing floor; *but* do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. [She tells Naomi to get cleaned up since Boaz had only seen her working in the yard. Ladies: How “pretty” do you feel after mowing the yard?] **4** Then it shall be, when he lies down, that you shall notice the place where he lies; and you shall go in, uncover his feet, and lie down; and he will tell you what you should do.” [This is incredibly risky! Moabite/Hebrew, young/old, woman/man, poor/rich, employee/employer]

**5** And she said to her, “All that you say to me I will do.” [Ruth is obedient]

**6 So she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law instructed her. 7 And after Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was cheerful, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain; and she came softly, uncovered his feet, and lay down.** [This was kind of like a marriage proposal; not provocative, but an act symbolizing total submission]

**8 Now it happened at midnight that the man was startled, and turned himself; and there, a woman was lying at his feet. 9 And he said, “Who are you?”**

**So she answered, “I am Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing** [see [Ruth 2:12](#)], **for you are a close relative.”** [Ruth is submissive. She wants his provision, his protection, and to be his wife. “Do you want me?” is a throwback to [Ruth 2:12](#). Boaz is the answer to His own prayer. She is placing herself under his “wing,” symbolized by the blanket. **How often do we miss the chance to be the answer to our own prayer? Am I being too passive?**]

**10 Then he said, “Blessed are you of the LORD, my daughter! For you have shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich. 11 And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you request, for all the people of my town know that you are a virtuous** [excellence] **woman. 12 Now it is true that I am a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I. 13 Stay this night, and in the morning it shall be that if he will perform the duty of a close relative for you—good; let him do it. But if he does not want to perform the duty for you, then I will perform the duty for you, as the LORD lives! Lie down until morning.”** [Boaz has accepted Ruth’s “proposal to propose,” if the “closer relative” rejects the offer. He may want a “romp on the threshing floor,” but he wants to honor the Law, Ruth, and God more. Boaz has integrity. God’s providential hand is most visible when we choose obedience.]

**14 So she lay at his feet until morning, and she arose before one could recognize another. Then he said, “Do not let it be known that the woman came to the threshing floor.” 15 Also he said, “Bring the shawl that is on you and hold it.” And when she held it, he measured six ephahs of barley, and laid it on her. Then she went into the city.** [Boaz honors Ruth by protecting her **reputation**. As a woman, I want my man to not only think highly of me, but to want others to think highly of me as well. Ruth begins to wait.]

**16 When she came to her mother-in-law, she said, “Is that you, my daughter?”**

**Then she told her all that the man had done for her. 17 And she said, “These six ephahs of barley he gave me; for he said to me, ‘Do not go empty-handed to your mother-in-law.’”**

**18 Then she said, “Sit still, my daughter, until you know how the matter will turn out; for the man will not rest until he has concluded the matter this day.”** [Imagine Ruth’s torment: either marrying a godly, upright man she trusted, or a complete stranger. Let us not miss the picture of the Gospel here: we (Ruth) come to Christ (Boaz) and ask to be accepted, loved, and redeemed: to be placed under the sovereign protection of His wing. Relying on His “work” to make that happen, because He loves us that much.]

## Ruth 4

### Boaz Redeems Ruth

**1** Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there; and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz had spoken came by. So Boaz said, "Come aside, friend, sit down here." So he came aside and sat down. **2** And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down. **3** Then he said to the close relative, "Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, sold the piece of land which *belonged* to our brother Elimelech. **4** And I thought to inform you, saying, 'Buy *it* back in the presence of the inhabitants and the elders of my people. If you will redeem *it*, redeem *it*; but if you will not redeem *it*, then tell me, that I may know; for *there is* no one but you to redeem *it*, and I *am* next after you.'"

And he said, "I will redeem *it*." [This relative was easily swayed at the prospect of profitable land]

**5** Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy *it* from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance."

**6** And the close relative said, "I cannot redeem *it* for myself, lest I ruin my own inheritance. You redeem my right of redemption for yourself, for I cannot redeem *it*." [He was unwilling to share his inheritance between his own children and any children he would have with Ruth. Boaz approaches this situation so that we see that he is a shrewd businessperson.]

**7** Now this *was the custom* in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging, to confirm anything: one man took off his sandal and gave *it* to the other, and this *was* a confirmation in Israel.

**8** Therefore the close relative said to Boaz, "Buy *it* for yourself." So he took off his sandal. **9** And Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You *are* witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that *was* Chilion's and Mahlon's, from the hand of Naomi. **10** Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from his position at the gate. You *are* witnesses this day." [God's providential hand is most visible when we choose obedience.]

**11** And all the people who *were* at the gate, and the elders, said, "*We are* witnesses. The LORD make the woman who is coming to your house like Rachel and Leah, the two who built the house of Israel; and may you prosper in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem. **12** May your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring which the LORD will give you from this young woman."

### Descendants of Boaz and Ruth

**13** So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife; and when he went in to her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son. [Previously ten years married and barren, God chooses to open her womb now. Their family line would have stopped, but now it will not only carry on, but will contribute to

the lineage of **Jesus Christ**.] **14 Then the women said to Naomi, “Blessed *be* the LORD, who has not left you this day without a close relative** [This is referring to Obed, who will care for Naomi in her old age. God’s providential hand is most visible when we choose obedience.]; **and may his name be famous in Israel! 15 And may he be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you, who is better to you than seven sons, has borne him.” 16 Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her bosom, and became a nurse to him. 17 Also the neighbor women gave him a name, saying, “There is a son born to Naomi.” And they called his name Obed. He *is* the father of Jesse, the father of David.** [God’s providential hand is most visible when we choose obedience.]

**18 Now this *is* the genealogy of Perez: Perez begot Hezron; 19 Hezron begot Ram, and Ram begot Amminadab; 20 Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon; 21 Salmon begot Boaz, and Boaz begot Obed; 22 Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David.** [Matthew 1: Mark Driscoll: There are prostitutes, and liars, and adulterers, and murderers in Jesus’ family, so come on in. There’s room for you, too. Death → Redeemer → New Life]

Challenge: A noble character is the foundation for a happy and productive life

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. Boaz is a model for men
2. Ruth is a model for women (compare **Proverbs 31** with Ruth’s life)
3. Jesus is the model for the church

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Men: Look like Boaz
2. Women: Look like Ruth
3. Church: Look like Jesus

# The Essential 100

## A Bible overview plan for 2011-2012

The Essential 100 (E100) is a systematic approach that guides readers through the big picture of the Bible. It is a carefully selected list of short Bible passages—50 from the Old Testament and 50 from the New Testament. Each testament is broken up into ten, five-week series. We will move from Old to New Testaments every five weeks. My goal is to teach three of the five lessons in every series.

The E100 in Sunday school: We will REAP (read, explain, apply, and personalize) one passage each week and finish a series every five weeks. Each lesson will include a key verse for memorization. At the end of two years, we will have covered the essential 100 passages in the Bible.

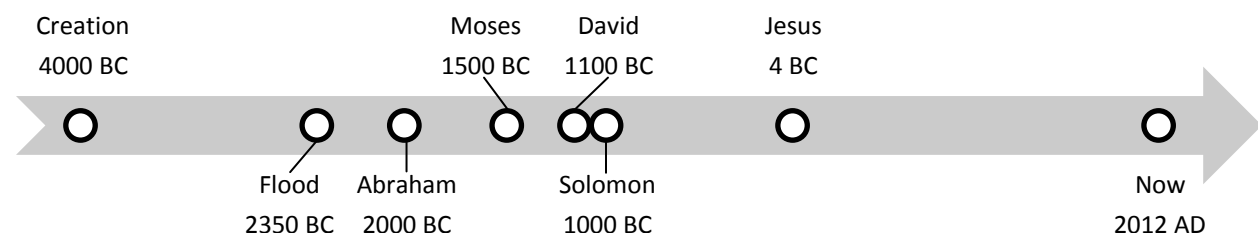
Additional information: To learn more about The E100 program and to obtain additional resources, visit [e100challenge.com](http://e100challenge.com). Our Sunday school website is [stuartheights.org/sundayschool](http://stuartheights.org/sundayschool).

## The Schedule: The Rise of Israel

This is our seventh five-week series in the Old Testament. So far, we have looked at In the Beginning, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, The Story of Joseph, Moses and the Exodus, The Law and the Land, and The Judges. Now we shift to The Rise of Israel.

Date	Lesson	Key Verse(s)	Passage	Speaker
March 11	Samuel Listens to God	1 Samuel 3:10	1 Samuel 1-3	Jim Fleming
March 18	King Saul	1 Samuel 10:1	1 Samuel 8-10	Tim Archer
March 25	David and Goliath	1 Samuel 17:10	1 Samuel 16:1-18:16	Jim Fleming
April 1	David and Saul	1 Samuel 24:10-11	1 Samuel 23:7-24:22	Jim Fleming
April 15	King David	2 Samuel 7:8-9	2 Samuel 5-7	Jim Fleming

Assuming a literal interpretation of Bible dates, the following timeline is close:



For the first 2,500 years of the world's history, the patriarchs received revelation from God passed it on orally to those around them. Around 1450 BC, the Law was given and Moses and Joshua administered it. After Moses and Joshua died, judges filled the leadership needs for Israel. Prophets intermittently helped Israel before she rose to regional power under the direction of kings (Saul, David, and Solomon).

# The Rise of Israel: Samuel Listens to God

---

## Preview: Contrasting Families and a Consistent Father

Throughout the roller-coaster ride that is the Old Testament, we see a wide variety of family situations. At the same time, we see a heavenly Father who always does the right thing at the right time.

Key thought: God always deals justly with every person (and He will raise up servants at the right time)

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): 1 Samuel 1-3 (Author = Samuel?)

### 1 Samuel 1

#### The Family of Elkanah

**1** Now there was a certain man of Ramathaim Zophim, of the mountains of Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah [God has possessed or God has created] the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. **2** And he had two wives: the name of one was Hannah [grace], and the name of the other Peninnah [jewel]. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children [so right away we see a theme in the Old Testament: even though polygamy is present, it is never present in a **happy** home (the discerning reader will see the unwritten message)]. **3** This man went up from his city yearly to worship and sacrifice to the LORD of hosts in Shiloh [David Guzik: Shiloh was the central city of Israel, the religious center, for almost **four** hundred years. The tabernacle—the majestic tent God command Moses to build when they came out of Egypt, was erected there, and in it sat the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark was the symbolic throne of God among Israel, the sacred chest containing the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments. At the Ark, once a year, the high priest would make atonement for the sins of the nation. Though it was hidden, it was a powerful and important part of Israel's religious life.]. Also the two sons of Eli, Hophni [pugilist] and Phinehas [mouth of brass], the priests of the LORD, were there. **4** And whenever the time came for Elkanah to make an offering [Offerings were commanded by the Law, but they were not for a person's salvation (salvation has always been by grace through faith in the one and only perfect sacrifice (Jesus Christ). Offerings were for having a right relationship with God. God is in charge, so He gets to decide how a right relationship with Him is defined. For us (in the New Covenant), a right relationship with God is defined by confessing our sins, believing that Jesus' perfect death paid for our sins, and walking in accordance with the teachings of Jesus. For them (in the Old Covenant), a right relationship with God was defined by sacrifices, believing that one day in the future the perfect once-for-all sacrifice would come, and walking in accordance with the Law.], he would give portions [portions of the remainder; Coffman: Worshippers were permitted to feast on the peace-offerings after the priests had taken their portion [side note: you never ate of the sin offering, but the peace offering and the thanksgiving offerings were fair game], and the event mentioned here was that of parceling out the food to individuals.] to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and daughters. **5** But to Hannah he would give a double [literally, a nose or angry portion, but figuratively a full or double] portion, for he loved Hannah, although the LORD had closed her womb [Who had closed her womb? The LORD]. **6** And her rival [Peninnah, Elkanah's first wife] also provoked



**her severely** [to provoke to anger—not just picking on—picking on until you get angry], **to make her miserable** [literally, to make her tremble like you tremble from thunder], **because the LORD had closed her womb.** **7 So it was, year by year, when she** [Hannah] **went up to the house of the LORD, that she** [Peninnah] **provoked her; therefore she** [Hannah] **wept** [to weep bitterly in grief and humiliation] **and did not eat** [but Hannah was obedient]. [David Guzik: It is possible for problems at home to make your time at the house of God miserable]

### Hannah's Vow

**8 Then Elkanah her husband said to her** [Hannah], **“Hannah, why do you weep? Why do you not eat? And why is your heart grieved? Am I not better to you than ten sons?”** [He appears to be either stupid, not paying attention, or both. Perhaps, he just did not see the big picture. David Guzik: Often, we don't understand God's ways, until He has finished accomplishing His purpose.]

**9 So Hannah arose after they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the tabernacle of the LORD.** **10 And she** [Hannah] **was in bitterness of soul, and prayed to the LORD and wept in anguish.** **11 Then she** [Hannah] **made a vow and said, “O LORD of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head.”** [She is honest with God and promises to make her son a **lifelong**/perpetual Nazarite—details on the vow of a Nazarite are found in **Numbers 6**]

**12 And it happened, as she** [Hannah] **continued praying before the LORD, that Eli watched her mouth.**

**13 Now Hannah spoke in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard** [the fact that God later answers this prayer is the basis for the theological appropriateness of silent prayers].

**Therefore Eli thought she was drunk.** **14 So Eli said to her, “How long will you be drunk? Put your wine away from you!”** [David Guzik: Hannah suffers from being misunderstood by both her husband and her high priest; our High Priest never misunderstands us (**Hebrews 4:14-16**).]

**15 But Hannah answered and said, “No, my lord, I am a woman of sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor intoxicating drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD.** **16 “Do not consider your maidservant a wicked [worthless] woman, for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief I have spoken until now.”**

**17 Then Eli answered and said, “Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition which you have asked of Him.”** [Eli blessed Hannah]

**18 And she said, “Let your maidservant find favor in your sight.” So the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad** [She left her **burden** before God].

### Samuel Is Born and Dedicated

**19 Then they** [Elkanah's family] **rose early in the morning and worshiped before the LORD, and returned and came to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew** [in the biblical sense] **Hannah his wife, and the LORD remembered** [not in the, ‘I had forgotten her,’ sense, but rather in the, ‘I’m focusing on you now,’ sense] **her.** **20 So it came to pass in the process of time that Hannah conceived and bore a**

son, and called his name Samuel, *saying*, “Because I have asked for him from the LORD.” [David Guzik: The name *Samuel* means “Name of **God**” but Hannah—as was common among the Hebrews—made a pun on the name by saying that she had “asked the LORD for him.” *Asked* in Hebrew sounds like *Samuel*.]

All jokes aside, God answers prayer. Answered prayer testimony from Albert Whiting here.

**21** Now the man Elkanah and all his house went up to offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice and his vow. **22** But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, “*Not* until the child is weaned; then I will take him, that he may appear before the LORD and remain there forever.”

**23** So Elkanah her husband said to her, “Do what seems best to you; wait until you have weaned him. Only let the LORD establish His word [i.e., do your part of the bargain and let God’s will be done].” Then the woman stayed and nursed her son until she had weaned him.

**24** Now when she had weaned him [Samuel is probably two or three], she took him up with her, with three bulls, one ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and brought him to the house of the LORD in Shiloh. And the child *was* young. **25** Then they slaughtered a bull, and brought the child to Eli [this alone is a tremendous act of faith given Eli’s highly questionable parenting skills]. **26** And she said, “O my lord! As your soul lives, my lord, I *am* the woman who stood by you here, praying to the LORD. **27** For this child I prayed, and the LORD has granted me my petition which I asked of Him. **28** Therefore I also have lent [giving him up as requested] him to the LORD; as long as he lives he shall be lent to the LORD.” So they worshiped the LORD there [but Hannah was **obedient**].

## 1 Samuel 2

### Hannah’s Prayer

**1** And Hannah prayed and said:

“My heart rejoices in the LORD;

My horn [literally a horn, but figuratively used for strength and might] is exalted in the LORD.

I smile at my enemies,

Because I rejoice in Your salvation.

**2** “No one is holy like the LORD,

For *there is* none besides You,

Nor *is there* any rock like our God.

**3** “Talk no more so very proudly;

Let no arrogance come from your mouth,

For the LORD *is* the God of knowledge;

And by Him actions are weighed.

**4** “The bows of the mighty men *are* broken,

And those who stumbled are girded with strength.

**5** *Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread,  
And the hungry have ceased to hunger.  
Even the barren has borne seven,  
And she who has many children has become feeble.*

**6** *"The LORD kills and makes alive;  
He brings down to the grave and brings up.*

**7** *The LORD makes poor and makes rich;  
He brings low and lifts up.*

**8** *He raises the poor from the dust  
And lifts the beggar from the ash heap,  
To set them among princes  
And make them inherit the throne of glory.*

*"For the pillars of the earth are the LORD's,  
And He has set the world upon them.*

**9** *He will guard the feet of His saints,  
But the wicked shall be silent in darkness.*

*"For by strength no man shall prevail.*

**10** *The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken in pieces;  
From heaven He will thunder against them.  
The LORD will judge the ends of the earth.*

*"He will give strength to His king,  
And exalt the horn of His anointed."*

**11** *Then Elkanah went to his house at Ramah. But the child ministered to the LORD before Eli the priest.*

### **The Wicked Sons of Eli**

**12** *Now the sons of Eli were corrupt [worthless]; they did not know the LORD [This is another one of those scary verses for those that are in service positions—just because you are in the game does not mean you are on the right team. In addition, the verse does not say they do not know about the Lord, it says they do not know the Lord. Undoubtedly, Eli had told them about God, but they did not know Him.].*

**13** *And the priests' custom with the people was that when any man offered a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come with a three-pronged fleshhook in his hand while the meat was boiling.*

**14** *Then he would thrust it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; and the priest would take for himself all that the fleshhook brought up. So they did in Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. **15** Also, before they burned the fat [the fat was God's part, so the priests were getting their 'cut' before the Lord got His], the priest's servant would come and say to the man who sacrificed, "Give meat for roasting to the priest, for he will not take boiled meat from you, but raw."*

**16 And if the man said to him, “They should really burn the fat first [i.e., you should do what God says and give Him His part first]; then you may take as much as your heart desires,” he would then answer him, “No, but you must give it now; and if not, I will take it by force.”**

**17 Therefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD, for men abhorred the offering of the LORD.** [Bottom line—the sons of Eli were swindling the people and people resented them for it (Leviticus 7 goes into detail on how this process should work and it was not working that way. Remember that the Devil used to be an angel. Do not miss the fact that those that were ‘supposed’ to be spiritual were not. Question: **Where is Eli?**)]

### Samuel’s Childhood Ministry

**18 But Samuel ministered before the LORD, even as a child, wearing a linen ephod** [a priestly garment—it would be like a little boy wearing a preacher’s suit]. **19 Moreover his mother used to make him a little robe, and bring it to him year by year when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice** [but Hannah was obedient]. **20 And Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, “The LORD give you descendants from this woman for the loan that was given to the LORD.” Then they would go to their own home.**

**21 And the LORD visited Hannah, so that she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile the child Samuel grew before the LORD.** [If you are keeping score, that is Hannah: **6**, Eli: **-2**]

### Prophecy Against Eli’s Household

**22 Now Eli was very old; and he heard everything his sons did to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 23 So he said to them, “Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all the people. 24 No, my sons! For it is not a good report that I hear. You make the LORD’s people transgress. 25 If one man sins against another, God will judge him. But if a man sins against the LORD, who will intercede for him?” Nevertheless they did not heed the voice of their father, because the LORD desired to kill them.**

**26 And the child Samuel grew in stature, and in favor both with the LORD and men** [This verse is similar to a verse in Acts 2 that describes the growth of the early church (God and people liked them). It is also an almost exact quote of Luke 2:52—the verse that describes Jesus’ growth and development.].

**27 Then a man of God came to Eli and said to him, “Thus says the LORD: ‘Did I not clearly reveal Myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh’s house? 28 Did I not choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be My priest, to offer upon My altar, to burn incense, and to wear an ephod before Me? And did I not give to the house of your father all the offerings of the children of Israel made by fire? 29 Why do you kick at My sacrifice and My offering which I have commanded in My dwelling place, and honor your sons more than Me, to make yourselves fat with the best of all the offerings of Israel My people?’ 30 Therefore the LORD God of Israel says: ‘I said indeed that your house and the house of your father would walk before Me forever.’ But now the LORD says: ‘Far be it from Me; for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed. 31 Behold, the days are coming that I will cut off your arm and the arm of your father’s house, so that there will not be an old man in your house. 32 And you will see an enemy in My dwelling place,**

*despite* all the good which God does for Israel. And there shall not be an old man in your house forever. **33** But any of your men *whom* I do not cut off from My altar shall consume your eyes and grieve your heart. And all the descendants of your house shall die in the flower of their age. **34** Now this *shall be* a sign to you that will come upon your two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas: in one day they shall die, both of them. **35** Then I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest *who* shall do according to what *is* in My heart and in My mind. I will build him a sure house, and he shall walk before My anointed forever. **36** And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left in your house will come *and* bow down to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and say, “Please, put me in one of the priestly positions, that I may eat a piece of bread.”” [God goes off through the voice of this unnamed servant to Eli about the behavior of Eli’s sons—the High Priest got a second-hand word from God]

Question: **Who was this faithful priest?** David Guzik: This promise was partially fulfilled in *Samuel*, because he functioned as a godly priest, effectively replacing the ungodly sons of Eli. The promise was partially fulfilled in *Zadok*, in the days of Solomon, because he replaced Eli's family line in the priesthood. The promise was ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ, because He is a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek ([Hebrews 7:12-17](#)).

## 1 Samuel 3

### Samuel's First Prophecy

**1** Now the boy Samuel ministered to the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare [valuable, prized, weighty, precious, rare, splendid, costly, highly valued, glorious, influential] *in those days; there was no widespread revelation.* **2** And it came to pass at that time, while Eli *was* lying down in his place, and when his eyes had begun to grow so dim that he could not see, **3** and before the lamp of God went out in the tabernacle of the LORD where the ark of God *was* [notice that Eli’s eyes and the lamp itself both reflect the **condition** of the priesthood at this time—very dim], *and while Samuel was lying down,* **4** that the LORD called Samuel. And he answered, “Here I am!” **5** So he ran to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.”

And he said, “I did not call; lie down again.” And he went and lay down.

**6** Then the LORD called yet again, “Samuel!”

So Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” He answered, “I did not call, my son; lie down again.” **7** (Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, nor was the word of the LORD yet revealed to him [meaning: God had never talked to Samuel before and Samuel did not know God’s **voice**].)

**8** And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. So he arose and went to Eli, and said, “Here I am, for you did call me.”

Then Eli perceived that the LORD had called the boy. **9** Therefore Eli said to Samuel, “Go, lie down; and it shall be, if He calls you, that you must say, ‘Speak, LORD, for Your servant hears.’” So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

**10 Now the LORD came and stood and called as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!"**

**And Samuel answered, "Speak, for Your servant hears."** [It is a beautiful thing to see obedient children. Also, God's revelation is not based on age. God's revelation does not discriminate based on **age**.]

**11 Then the LORD said to Samuel: "Behold, I will do something in Israel at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. 12 In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. 13 For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows, because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them. 14 And therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever."** [Think about telling a child this information. This would have been almost overwhelming to a child.]

**15 So Samuel lay down until morning, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD** [this was probably one of Samuel's jobs at the tabernacle]. **And Samuel was afraid to tell Eli the vision. 16 Then Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son!"**

**He answered, "Here I am."**

**17 And he [Eli] said, "What is the word that the LORD spoke to you? Please do not hide it from me. God do so to you, and more also, if you hide anything from me of all the things that He said to you." 18 Then Samuel told him everything** [literally, every word], **and hid nothing from him** [God's man must always deliver God's **message** (this character trait will be crucial for Samuel's service going forward). **Coffman: In this passage, we learn that Samuel passed the severest test that any proclaimer of God's Word must confront, that is, the necessity to convey unwelcome words of the Lord to those who need to hear them, and the task is especially difficult if the words must be spoken to those whom we love, respect and honor, as was the case in this instance with Samuel.]. And he said, "It is the LORD. Let Him do what seems good to Him."**

**19 So Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. 20 And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba [Coffman: the northern and southern extremities of Israel] knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet** [not a priest, but a prophet] **of the LORD. 21 Then the LORD appeared again in Shiloh. For the LORD revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.**

### **Apply (What is the point?)**

1. Speaking the truth (like Hannah and Samuel) is hard
2. God will raise up leaders at the right time
3. God deals **justly** with all men and women

### **Personalize (What do I do with that?)**

1. Speak the truth to God, to men, and to yourself
2. Pray for and **encourage** godly leaders when God raises them up
3. Know that God will always do the right thing

# The Rise of Israel: King Saul

---

## Preview: Israel Demands a King

As we review this text, notice how God allows Israel to make their own decisions even as they reject Him in the process. Yet His mercy and grace are prevalent at the same time.

Key thought:

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): 1 Samuel 8-10 (Author = Samuel?)

### 1 Samuel 8

#### Israel Demands a King

**1** Now it came to pass when Samuel was old that he made his sons judges over Israel [God was the **judge** appointer—not man]. **2** The name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; **they were judges in Beersheba** [approximately 60 miles away]. **3** But his sons did not walk in his ways; **they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice.** [It amazes me how we find one of the godliest figures in the Bible not pass on his character traits. Being holy does not necessarily make us good parents. Nor does becoming old make us weak and less able to make truly objective decisions. **Does it matter that these were his children?** It does seem that he faltered in this area and was unable or unwilling to address this ongoing problem. Understand, each one of us will answer for our **own** actions.]

**4** Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, **5** and said to him, **“Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.”** [Although it seems the motives were justified, the root request was not. **David Guzik: God knew that one day Israel would have a king. Four hundred years before this, God gave instructions to Israel about their future king (Deuteronomy 17:14-20).** A king was in God’s plan for Israel. King: absolute **power** in a man’s hand as long as he and his family/appointee lives. Judge: power appointed by God for a period to address a specific issue.]

**6** But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, **“Give us a king to judge us.”** So Samuel prayed to the LORD. **7** And the LORD said to Samuel, **“Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them.”** [God was going to use this situation in an attempt to teach Israel yet another lesson. I recall allowing my son David to learn a tough lesson growing up. Several of my children and I were taking a walk one day. A couple of the kids were on bicycles and we were enjoying the time together. One of my neighbors had a gravel mound in his yard and my son David set his mind on conquering it. He began begging me to allow him to take his bike and jump it but I would not allow it, explaining the possibility of “breaking his little neck.” He just would not leave it or me alone and I finally gave in by saying, “Okay son, but do not go too fast and if/when you hit the ground, I do not want you to come crying about it. He ecstatically agreed and took off. Wow, what an amazing crash but he got up brushed the gravel out of the cuts and held his



composure to the best of his ability. I did run to him and consoled his little ego but at the same time, he understood that daddy was telling him the truth and needed to be listened to.] **8 According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day—with which they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also. 9 Now therefore, heed their voice. However, you shall solemnly forewarn them, and show them the behavior of the king who will reign over them.** [In spite of his hurt and rejection, Samuel still pursued God's will in this. In doing so, this allowed the Lord to put things in the correct perspective for him. **When we are treated wrongly, what is our reaction?** Outside action does not force our **reaction**. Circumstances may influence us heavily but as Christians, we are able to have self-control in the midst of these same circumstances.]

**10 So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who asked him for a king. 11 And he said, "This will be the behavior of the king who will reign over you: He will take your sons and appoint them for his own chariots and to be his horsemen, and some will run before his chariots. 12 He will appoint captains over his thousands and captains over his fifties, will set some to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and some to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. 13 He will take your daughters to be perfumers, cooks, and bakers. 14 And he will take the best of your fields, your vineyards, and your olive groves, and give them to his servants. 15 He will take a tenth of your grain and your vintage, and give it to his officers and servants. 16 And he will take your male servants, your female servants, your finest young men, and your donkeys, and put them to his work. 17 He will take a tenth of your sheep. And you will be his servants. 18 And you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, and the LORD will not hear you in that day."** [God takes the time to point out some of the specific oppressions that the people will face under the leadership of the world-style leader. In His wisdom, He is already showing the comparison between a loving God and the façade which we experience in a fallen world. **Christ** is that perfect leader. **Are we looking to Christ as the real leader in our lives or are we simply going through the motions, fooling ourselves and looking good to please others?**]

**19 Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, "No, but we will have a king over us, 20 that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles."**

**21 And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he repeated them in the hearing of the LORD. 22 So the LORD said to Samuel, "Heed their voice, and make them a king."**

**And Samuel said to the men of Israel, "Every man go to his city."** [Did you **hear** what I **heard**? The Israelites had made up their minds about this and it seems there is no turning back. Therefore, God is going to allow them to make their bed and eventually lay in it.]

## 1 Samuel 9

### Saul Chosen to Be King

**1 There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite [Genesis 49:10: God's choice was Judah], a mighty man of power [wealth and/or influence]. 2 And he had a choice and handsome son whose name was Saul.**



**There was not a more handsome person than he among the children of Israel. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people.** [Pretty is as **pretty** does. Notice that the attributes listed about Saul are exterior. Not much has changed in several thousand years. We still pay homage to the god of beauty. It is a fact that beauty will offer many more opportunities for someone. Also, notice that nothing is mentioned about Saul being a man of God. **1 Samuel 16:7b: For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart. David Guzik: Saul was exactly the type of king that the people wanted. He was the king from central casting. God is giving Israel the kind of leaders they wanted and deserved!**]

**3 Now the donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. And Kish said to his son Saul, "Please take one of the servants with you, and arise, go and look for the donkeys." 4 So he passed through the mountains of Ephraim and through the land of Shalisha, but they did not find them. Then they passed through the land of Shaalim, and they were not there. Then he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they did not find them.**

**5 When they had come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who was with him, "Come, let us return, lest my father cease caring about the donkeys and become worried about us."** [It is ironic that they were about to give up the search just when they were getting close to a huge blessing from God]

**6 And he said to him, "Look now, there is in this city a man of God, and he is an honorable man; all that he says surely comes to pass. So let us go there; perhaps he can show us the way that we should go."**

**7 Then Saul said to his servant, "But look, if we go, what shall we bring the man? For the bread in our vessels is all gone, and there is no present to bring to the man of God. What do we have?"**

**8 And the servant answered Saul again and said, "Look, I have here at hand one-fourth of a shekel of silver. I will give that to the man of God, to tell us our way." 9 (Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he spoke thus: "Come, let us go to the seer"; for he who is now called a prophet was formerly called a seer.)** [Seek godly **wisdom**. Do not confuse this with being a fortuneteller. Seer was simply an old name for prophet.]

**10 Then Saul said to his servant, "Well said; come, let us go." So they went to the city where the man of God was.** [Saul seems not to have heard of Samuel, the spiritual leader and judge of Israel. This is a sad acknowledgement that Saul's parents had failed to see the importance of pursuing God and teaching the same to their child.]

**11 As they went up the hill to the city, they met some young women going out to draw water, and said to them, "Is the seer here?"**

**12 And they answered them and said, "Yes, there he is, just ahead of you. Hurry now; for today he came to this city, because there is a sacrifice of the people today on the high place [what a coincidence—Samuel was in the city and happened to be just in front of them]. 13 As soon as you come into the city, you will surely find him before he goes up to the high place to eat. For the people will**

not eat until he comes, because he must bless the sacrifice; afterward those who are invited will eat. Now therefore, go up, for about this time you will find him.” **14** So they went up to the city. As they were coming into the city, there was Samuel, coming out toward them on his way up to the high place.

**15** Now the LORD had told Samuel in his ear the day before Saul came, saying, **16** “Tomorrow about this time I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him commander over My people Israel, that he may save My people from the hand of the Philistines [The God of **grace** and **mercy**. In spite of the rejection our Lord was witnessing, He was still going to use the “King” for His purpose. He was still in control.]; for I have looked upon My people, because their cry has come to Me.”

**17** So when Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said to him, “There he is, the man of whom I spoke to you. This one shall reign over My people.” **18** Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, “Please tell me, where *is* the seer’s house?”

**19** Samuel answered Saul and said, “*I am* the seer. Go up before me to the high place, for you shall eat with me today; and tomorrow I will let you go and will tell you all that *is* in your heart. **20** But as for your donkeys that were lost three days ago, do not be anxious about them, for they have been found. And on whom *is* all the desire of Israel? *Is it* not on you and on all your father’s house?”

**21** And Saul answered and said, “*Am* I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then do you speak like this to me?” [God honors the **humble**. **Isaiah 66:2**: “For all those *things* My hand has made, And all those *things* exist,” Says the LORD. “But on this *one* will I look: On *him who is* poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word.”]

**22** Now Samuel took Saul and his servant and brought them into the hall, and had them sit in the place of honor among those who were invited; there *were* about thirty persons. **23** And Samuel said to the cook, “Bring the portion which I gave you, of which I said to you, ‘Set it apart.’” **24** So the cook took up the thigh with its upper part and set *it* before Saul. And *Samuel* said, “Here it is, what was kept back. *It* was set apart for you. Eat; for until this time it has been kept for you, since I said I invited the people.” So Saul ate with Samuel that day.

**25** When they had come down from the high place into the city, *Samuel* spoke with Saul on the top of the house. **26** They arose early; and it was about the dawning of the day that Samuel called to Saul on the top of the house, saying, “Get up, that I may send you on your way.” And Saul arose, and both of them went outside, he and Samuel.

### Saul Anointed King

**27** As they were going down to the outskirts of the city, Samuel said to Saul, “Tell the servant to go on ahead of us.” And he went on. “But you stand here awhile, that I may announce to you the word of **God**.” [Samuel used the circumstances and the telling of the future to obtain Saul’s trust. Maybe Samuel did some of these things with the hope that this humble young man would listen to Godly counsel.]

## 1 Samuel 10

**1** Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured *it* on his head, and kissed him and said: “*Is it not because the LORD has anointed you commander over His inheritance?*” [Private **anointing**. Although Saul is being anointed as the anointed king, he is really just the caretaker of the true King of Kings. **David Guzik: But the *idea* of anointing is much bigger. What happened to Saul’s head and body was simply a picture of what God was doing in him spiritually. The Holy Spirit was being poured out on him, equipping him for the job of being king over Israel.** As I reviewed these verses, I couldn’t help but be reminded that when we are saved, it is first a private anointing and then made public as a witness to what God has done and will be doing.]] **2** When you have departed from me today, you will find two men by Rachel’s tomb in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say to you, ‘The donkeys which you went to look for have been found. And now your father has ceased caring about the donkeys and is worrying about you, saying, “What shall I do about my son?”’ **3** Then you shall go on forward from there and come to the terebinth tree of Tabor. There three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you, one carrying three young goats, another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a skin of wine. **4** And they will greet you and give you two *loaves* of bread, which you shall receive from their hands. **5** After that you shall come to the hill of God where the Philistine garrison *is* [in the midst of the enemy’s camp]. And it will happen, when you have come there to the city, that you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with a stringed instrument, a tambourine, a flute, and a harp before them; and they will be prophesying. **6** Then the Spirit of the LORD will come upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man. **7** And let it be, when these signs come to you, *that* you do as the occasion demands; for God *is* with you. **8** You shall go down before me to Gilgal; and surely I will come down to you to offer burnt offerings *and* make sacrifices of peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, till I come to you and show you what you should do.” [Again, Samuel is exemplifying God using him to convey these things to Saul and that the one true God can be trusted to fulfill this anointing by showing him future events and thereby allowing him to witness this evidence. Our Lord so often gives us opportunities in our lives and allows us to see all the awesome things that are potentially going to happen and then tell us to “wait” on Him and be patient.]

**9** So it was, when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, that God gave him another heart; and all those signs came to pass that day. **10** When they came there to the hill, there was a group of prophets to meet him; then the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. **11** And it happened, when all who knew him formerly saw that he indeed prophesied among the prophets, that the people said to one another, “What *is* this *that* has come upon the son of Kish? *Is* Saul also among the prophets?” **12** Then a man from there answered and said, “But who *is* their father?” Therefore it became a proverb: “*Is* Saul also among the prophets?” **13** And when he had finished prophesying, he went to the high place. [The change was **evident**. There was no doubt that something very visible and unbelievable had occurred in Saul’s life. Too many of us forget that we are new creatures in the Lord and this is to be evident to the world as well, all the time. As pastor Gary has said, we are the Bible that people see/read.]

**14** Then Saul’s uncle said to him and his servant, “Where did you go?”

So he said, "To look for the donkeys. When we saw that *they were nowhere to be found*, we went to Samuel."

**15** And Saul's uncle said, "Tell me, please, what Samuel said to you."

**16** So Saul said to his uncle, "He told us plainly that the donkeys had been found." But about the matter of the kingdom, he did not tell him what Samuel had said. [Saul hides the fact that he has been anointed the future king. He does however let it be known that Samuel had let them know about the livestock and they had believed and trusted him.]

### Saul Proclaimed King

**17** Then Samuel called the people together to the LORD at Mizpah, **18** and said to the children of Israel, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians *and* from the hand of all kingdoms and from those who oppressed you.' **19** But you have today rejected your God, who Himself saved you from all your adversities and your tribulations; and you have said to Him, 'No, set a king over us!' Now therefore, present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and by your clans." [Will you ever **learn**? One final time and to a larger audience and leaders of Israel, Samuel shares how through all that God has brought them that they are still ultimately turning their backs on God. There will be no excuses for what they will experience. In essence, you have made your bed and now you will lay in it. **David Guzik: It is easy for us to think, "Wow, those Israelites were really stupid. How foolish it is to reject God like that!" But are we much different? Whenever we, even in the smallest way, reject God, we show the same lack of sense.**]

**20** And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was chosen. **21** When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was chosen. And Saul the son of Kish was chosen. But when they sought him, he could not be found. **22** Therefore they inquired of the LORD further, "Has the man come here yet?"

And the LORD answered, "There he is, hidden among the equipment." [Maybe he was feeling the stress of the moment and did not want to face it]

**23** So they ran and brought him from there; and when he stood among the people, he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward. **24** And Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see him whom the LORD has chosen, that *there is no one like him among all the people*?"

So all the people shouted and said, "Long live the king!"

**25** Then Samuel explained to the people the behavior of royalty, and wrote *it* in a book and laid *it* up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house. **26** And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and valiant *men* went with him, whose hearts God had touched. **27** But some rebels said, "How can this man save us?" So they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace. [The One **true** King. Saul is reciting again the attributes that the worldly people want to see in a leader. Yet, when Christ came and walked among men, the Bible mentions none of these attributes. Yes, they still tried to set him up as the king with the idea of overthrowing the Romans, but from the

beginning, God has pointed us to something much deeper than the superficial and instead pointed us to the Superior One—Jesus, our Spiritual Savior.]

### **Apply (What is the point?)**

1. God is in good
2. God is not **caught** off guard
3. God exemplifies mercy and grace

### **Personalize (What do I do with that?)**

1. Recognize your position in Christ and be humble
2. Be honest with yourself
3. **Proverbs 3:5: Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding**

# The Rise of Israel: David and Goliath

---

## Preview: Ultimate Fighting Championship

So far, in this five-week series, God has raised up Samuel in order to raise up Saul. Now, after Saul has proven himself insufficient for the task of being Israel's king, God shows Himself to be all-wise in raising up David to take Saul's place.

Key thought: God's plan of redemption cannot be defeated from without or from within

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): 1 Samuel 16:1-18:16 (Author = Samuel?)

### 1 Samuel 16

#### David Anointed King

**1 Now the LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul [the king of Israel, whose name means, 'desired'—which reflects Israel's view—they desired a king], seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite [we have seen Jesse's name before in our 100-week series—Jesse is the **grandson** of Boaz and Ruth]. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons."** [God is going to provide Himself a king from the line of a foreigner? Yes—because God is in the business of making beauty from ashes. **Justin Harness: Samuel had a difficult task . . . he had to anoint a new king who he knew nothing about other than the act that God would choose him.**]

**2 And Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me."** [Implying that Saul had a reputation for poor responses to bad news]

**But the LORD said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.' 3 Then invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; you shall anoint [put oil on the forehead of in order to set aside—a **ceremony** to visibly pick a person for a job] for Me the one I name to you."**

**4 So Samuel did what the LORD said, and went to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, "Do you come peaceably?"**

**5 And he said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice." Then he consecrated [set apart] Jesse and his sons, and invited them to the sacrifice.**

**6 So it was, when they came, that he [Samuel] looked at Eliab and said, "Surely the LORD's anointed is before Him!"**

**7 But the LORD said to Samuel [and Samuel may have been the only one that heard this], "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."** [Once again, we

see the principle that God does not always choose whom we would choose. He chooses the small, the weak, and the outcasts. He did it with many in the Old Testament (Joseph, Moses, Jacob, and David).]

**8 So Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.” 9 Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the LORD chosen this one.” 10 Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, “The LORD has not chosen these.” 11 And Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all the young men here?” Then he said, “There remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the sheep.”**

**And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and bring him. For we will not sit down till he comes here.” 12 So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy [probably either red haired and pale skinned], with bright [handsome] eyes, and good-looking [he was not as good-looking as Saul—the Bible says he was the best-looking man in Israel]. And the LORD said, “Arise, anoint him; for this is the one!” 13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward [As contrasted with our constant indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the Old Testament saints usually only experienced short-term filling. Most commentators feel David is 10-15 years old at this time. David would not take the throne for another 20+ years.]. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah.**

No celebration, no pomp, no circumstance—just a private ceremony where David’s family and Samuel were the only ones that knew what happened. The text does not even tell us that Samuel told David or his family what he was anointing him to be. It may have been secret to keep Saul from finding out.

Also, remember the story of Joseph when God gave Joseph the dreams of being famous. What did Joseph do? He flaunted that soon-to-be fame in the face of his brothers and it backfired. David did nothing of the sort. Through the silence of the Scriptures, we can only assume that he handled it wisely.

### A Distressing Spirit Troubles Saul

**14 But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a distressing [evil, bad] spirit from the LORD troubled him. 15 And Saul’s servants said to him, “Surely, a distressing spirit from God is troubling you. 16 Let our master now command your servants, who are before you, to seek out a man who is a skillful player on the harp [not our modern-day harps that were body-length, but a smaller instrument that could easily be carried with one person]. And it shall be that he will play it with his hand when the distressing spirit from God is upon you, and you shall be well.” [Adam Clarke: Saul’s evil spirit, and the influence of music upon it, are not easily accounted for.]**

**17 So Saul said to his servants, “Provide me now a man who can play well, and bring him to me.”**

**18 Then one of the servants answered [another unnamed ‘other’ who changed the course of Israeli history by his recommendation—we should always be on the lookout for people to fill needs] and said, “Look, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who is skillful in playing, a mighty man of valor [brave], a man of war, prudent in speech, and a handsome person; and the LORD is with him.”**

**19** Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse, and said, “Send me your son David, who *is* with the sheep.” **20** And Jesse took a donkey *loaded with bread*, a skin of wine, and a young goat, and sent *them* by his son David to Saul. **21** So David came to Saul and stood before him. And he loved him greatly, and he became his armorbearer [Armorbearer is a trusted position whose job it was to carry the king’s armor and to kill the king if overtaken in battle so that the king could die with honor. **David Guzik:** This was an important time in David’s life and training for the destiny God had for him. For the first time, he was in a royal court, and began to learn the customs and manners that he would need to be a good king later in life.]. **22** Then Saul sent to Jesse, saying, “Please let David stand before me, for he has found favor in my sight.” **23** And so it was, whenever the [distressing] spirit from God was upon Saul, that David would take a harp and play it with his hand. Then Saul would become refreshed [able to breathe easily] and well [happy, good], and the distressing spirit would depart from him. [We are not sure how much time passes between **1 Samuel 16** and **1 Samuel 17**. **1 Samuel 14:52** mentions that the Philistines are at war with Israel the entire rule of Saul.]

## 1 Samuel 17

### David and Goliath

**1** Now the Philistines gathered their armies together to battle, and were gathered at Sochoh, which *belongs* to Judah; they encamped between Sochoh and Azekah, in Ephes Dammim. **2** And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and they encamped in the Valley of Elah, and drew up in battle array against the Philistines. **3** The Philistines stood on a mountain on one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side, with a valley between them. [show the rock]

**4** And a champion [literally, the space between two armies—a champion moves forward when other stand their ground; a champion enters into danger on behalf of another; a champion sees a need and steps up to fill it—**Jesus** is our champion] *went out from the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath* [splendor], *from Gath* [one of the five major cities of the Philistines], *whose height was six cubits and a span* [( 6 x 18 + 9 ) / 12 = 9’ 9” tall]. **5** *He had a bronze helmet on his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of bronze* [about 125 pounds]. **6** *And he had bronze armor on his legs and a bronze javelin between his shoulders.* **7** Now the staff of his spear *was* like a weaver’s beam, and his iron spearhead *weighed* six hundred shekels [about 15 pounds]; and a shield-bearer *went before him* [he was wearing so much armor that he did not have room to carry his own shield]. **8** Then he stood and cried out to the armies of Israel, and said to them, “Why have you come out to line up for battle? *Am* I not a Philistine, and you the servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. **9** If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and serve us.” **10** And the Philistine said, “I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together.” **11** When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid. [Goliath was more of a hero than Saul was. **Justin Harness:** Saul was a **passive** leader watching from the sidelines.]

**12** Now David *was* the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem Judah, whose name *was* Jesse, and who had eight sons. And the man *was* old, advanced *in years*, in the days of Saul. **13** The three oldest sons



of Jesse had gone to follow Saul to the battle. The names of his three sons who went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, next to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. **14 David was the youngest. And the three oldest followed Saul. 15 But David occasionally went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem.**

**16 And the Philistine drew near and presented himself forty days, morning and evening.** [It takes three weeks to form a new habit and another three weeks to get comfortable with the new habit. Educationally speaking, the Israelites were now 'used' to Goliath doing this every day.]

**17 Then Jesse said to his son David, "Take now for your brothers an ephah of this dried grain and these ten loaves, and run to your brothers at the camp. 18 And carry these ten cheeses to the captain of their thousand, and see how your brothers fare, and bring back news of them." 19 Now Saul and they and all the men of Israel were in the Valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.**

**20 So David rose early in the morning, left the sheep with a keeper** [This phrase sums up David—he was **faithful** to that which he was entrusted with. My boss asked me why I thought God blessed SHBC. I had no answer. He replied with The Parable of the Talents.], **and took the things and went as Jesse had commanded him. And he came to the camp as the army was going out to the fight and shouting for the battle. 21 For Israel and the Philistines had drawn up in battle array, army against army. 22 And David left his supplies in the hand of the supply keeper, ran to the army, and came and greeted his brothers. 23 Then as he talked with them, there was the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, coming up from the armies of the Philistines; and he spoke according to the same words. So David heard them. 24 And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him and were dreadfully afraid. 25 So the men of Israel said, "Have you seen this man who has come up? Surely he has come up to defy Israel; and it shall be that the man who kills him the king will enrich with great riches, will give him his daughter, and give his father's house exemption from taxes in Israel."**

**26 Then David spoke to the men who stood by him, saying, "What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"**

**27 And the people answered him in this manner, saying, "So shall it be done for the man who kills him."**

**28 Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger was aroused against David, and he said, "Why did you come down here? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your pride and the insolence of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle."** [There will always be Sanballats, Tobiahs, and Eliabs who will belittle you and your work when you do a great work—fix your eyes on the Lord and do your job]

**29 And David said, "What have I done now? Is there not a cause [i.e., Is God's name not on the line here? Does no one else get that fact?]" 30 Then he turned from him toward another and said the same thing; and these people answered him as the first ones did.**

**31** Now when the words which David spoke were heard, they reported *them* to Saul; and he sent for him. **32** Then David said to Saul, “Let no man’s heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine.” [David Guzik: It is one thing to say, “*Someone* should do something about that.” It is entirely another thing to say, “*I* will do something about that.”]

**33** And Saul said to David, “You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you *are* a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.”

**34** But David said to Saul, “Your servant used to keep his father’s sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, **35** I went out after it and struck it, and delivered *the lamb* from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught *it* by its beard, and struck and killed it. **36** Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God.” **37** Moreover David said, “The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.” [David’s **God** was bigger than Saul’s **Goliath**. David Guzik: This is generally God’s pattern for preparation. He calls us to be faithful right where we are at, and then uses our faithfulness to accomplish greater things for Him. . . . When we are in the midst of our preparation, we rarely see how God is going to use it. Spurgeon: Many men have lions and bears, but no experience.]

And Saul said to David, “Go, and the LORD be with you!”

**38** So Saul clothed David with his armor, and he put a bronze helmet on his head; he also clothed him with a coat of mail [Saul was using conventional wisdom and wanted to give David every advantage that Goliath had]. **39** David fastened his sword to his armor and tried to walk, for he had not tested *them*. And David said to Saul, “I cannot walk with these, for I have not tested *them*.” So David took them off.

**40** Then he took his staff in his hand [use what is in your hand for God]; and he chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in a shepherd’s bag, in a pouch which he had, and his sling was in his hand [use what is in your hand for God]. And he drew near to the Philistine. [Justin Harness: David was a leader who would gain the trust and confidence of his people by fighting for them, with them.] **41** So the Philistine came, and began drawing near to David, and the man who bore the shield *went* before him [this was not a fair fight—it was two on one]. **42** And when the Philistine looked about and saw David, he disdained him [despised him, held him in contempt]; for he was *only* a youth, ruddy and good-looking. **43** So the Philistine said to David, “Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?” [David Guzik: The Hebrew word for dog (*kaleb*) is used in passages like Deuteronomy 23:18 for male homosexual prostitutes.] And the Philistine cursed David by his [Goliath’s] gods. **44** And the Philistine said to David, “Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!”

**45** Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. **46** This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you [David did not have a sword—he had a sling. You cannot take a man’s head off with a sling.]. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild

beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. **47** Then all this assembly shall know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD's, and He will give you into our hands." [Perhaps David was remembering this day when he wrote [Psalm 20](#)]

**48** So it was, when the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, that David hurried and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine [A champion moves forward when other stand their ground. A champion enters into danger on behalf of another. A champion sees a need and steps up to fill it. Justin Harness: David's confidence was extraordinary. . . . He took a knife to a gunfight and did it willingly. Warren Wiersbe: God can deliver his people through trials in His own way through the humblest of means.]. **49** Then David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone; and he slung it and struck the Philistine in his forehead, so that the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the earth. **50** So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him. But *there was* no sword in the hand of David. **51** Therefore David ran and stood over the Philistine, took his sword and drew it out of its sheath [which would have been a near Herculean effort on its own] and killed him, and cut off his head with it. [No armor in the world will save you when it is your time to die. Ray C. Stedman: by death the Lord Jesus slew . . . the Devil]

And when the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. **52** Now the men of Israel and Judah arose and shouted, and pursued the Philistines as far as the entrance of the valley and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell along the road to Shaaraim, even as far as Gath and Ekron. **53** Then the children of Israel returned from chasing the Philistines, and they plundered their tents. **54** And David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his armor in his tent [perhaps as a reminder of what God had done].

**55** When Saul saw David going out against the Philistine, he said to Abner, the commander of the army, "Abner, whose son is this youth?"

And Abner said, "As your soul lives, O king, I do not know."

**56** So the king said, "Inquire whose son this young man is."

**57** Then, as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand [some trophies you want to carry around]. **58** And Saul said to him, "Whose son are you, young man?"

So David answered, "*I am* the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite."

## 1 Samuel 18

### Saul Resents David

**1** Now when he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan [Saul's son and the heir to Saul's throne] was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. **2** Saul took him that day, and would not let him go home to his father's house anymore. **3** Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. **4** And Jonathan took off the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, even to his sword and his bow and his belt.

**5 So David went out wherever Saul sent him, and behaved wisely** [How many of our American Idols do not behave wisely when fame and fortune are thrust upon them at a young age?]. **And Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants.** **6 Now it had happened as they were coming home, when David was returning from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women had come out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy, and with musical instruments.** **7 So the women sang as they danced, and said:**

**"Saul has slain his thousands,  
And David his ten thousands."**

**8 Then Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him; and he said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed *only* thousands. Now *what* more can he have but the kingdom?"** **9 So Saul eyed David from that day forward** [rash behavior is often connected to jealousy].

**10 And it happened on the next day that the distressing spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied inside the house. So David played music with his hand, as at other times; but *there was a spear in Saul's hand*** [Adam Clarke: *The javelin or spear was the emblem of regal authority; kings always had it at hand, and in ancient monuments they are always represented with it*]. **11 And Saul cast the spear, for he said, "I will pin David to the wall!" But David escaped his presence twice.** [Twice? Most of us would have bailed on Saul. However, David was faithful to the job that Saul had given him. **Esther Archer: At no point in his service did David challenge Saul's authority as King.**]

**12 Now Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, but had departed from Saul.** **13 Therefore Saul removed him from his presence, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people.** **14 And David behaved wisely in all his ways, and the LORD was with him.** **15 Therefore, when Saul saw that he behaved very wisely, he was afraid of him.** **16 But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them.**

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. God knows what He is doing when He picks people
2. **Esther Archer: When God gives you more responsibilities or a "higher" status, do not think of yourself as more important than others**
3. Giant-killing is **contagious** (2 Samuel 21:15-22)

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Get behind leaders and help them do the work
2. Stay **humble** and know that God is empowering
3. Let God use you to kill giants

# The Rise of Israel: David and Saul

---

## Preview: Cat and Mouse

In today's passage, Saul is pursuing David in order to kill David. Saul's actions show him spiraling downward while David rises to the occasion. Throughout this text, God shows us that He is developing maturity in us by giving us opportunities to express the **opposite** of what He desires.

Key thought: Do right right now (only a steadfast focus on God will keep us from sin)

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): 1 Samuel 23:7-24:22 (Author = Samuel?)

### 1 Samuel 23

**7** And Saul was told that David had gone to Keilah. So Saul said, "God has delivered him into my hand, for he has shut himself in by entering a town that has gates and bars." **8** Then Saul called all the people together for war, to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men. [David Guzik: Saul makes the common mistake of assuming that someone is an enemy of the LORD just because they are *our* enemy. Saul *wouldn't* go to Keilah to save the people of Keilah against the Philistines, but he *would* go there to try and save himself against David. Saul is totally motivated by self-interest.]

**9** When David knew that Saul plotted evil against him, he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring the ephod here." **10** Then David said, "O LORD God of Israel, Your servant has certainly heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah to destroy the city for my sake. **11** [David Guzik: Notice how the questions are presented in a "Yes or No" format, because that is how the *Urim and Thummim* were used.] Will the men of Keilah deliver me into his hand? Will Saul come down, as Your servant has heard? O LORD God of Israel, I pray, tell Your servant."

And the LORD said, "He will come down."

**12** Then David said, "Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul?" [This is the second time David asks God this question. Is David doubting God or clarifying? The text does not say.]

And the LORD said, "They will deliver you."

**13** So David and his men, about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah and went wherever they could go. Then it was told Saul that David had escaped from Keilah; so he halted the expedition. [God can keep you safe in the **city**]

### David in Wilderness Strongholds

**14** And David stayed in strongholds in the wilderness, and remained in the mountains in the Wilderness of Ziph. Saul sought him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hand. **15** So David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life. And David was in the Wilderness of Ziph in a forest. **16** Then Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David in the woods and strengthened his hand in God.

**17** And he said to him, “Do not fear, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you. Even my father Saul knows that.” [Did everything that Jonathan says happen? All but sitting next to David as king] **18** So the two of them made a covenant before the LORD. And David stayed in the woods, and Jonathan went to his own house. [As far as we know, they **never** saw each other again. **Esther Archer: Be aware of opportunities God gives you to encourage others stay strong in their faith in God.**]

**19** Then the Ziphites came up to Saul at Gibeah, saying, “Is David not hiding with us in strongholds in the woods, in the hill of Hachilah, which *is* on the south of Jeshimon? **20** Now therefore, O king, come down according to all the desire of your soul to come down; and our part *shall be* to deliver him into the king’s hand.” [David wrote **Psalm 54** at this time]

**21** And Saul said, “Blessed *are* you of the LORD, for you have compassion on me. **22** Please go and find out for sure, and see the place where his hideout is, *and* who has seen him there. For I am told he is very crafty. **23** See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hides; and come back to me with certainty, and I will go with you. And it shall be, if he is in the land, that I will search for him throughout all the clans of Judah.”

**24** So they arose and went to Ziph before Saul. But David and his men *were* in the Wilderness of Maon, in the plain on the south of Jeshimon. **25** When Saul and his men went to seek *him*, they told David. [God can keep you safe in the **forest**] Therefore he went down to the rock, and stayed in the Wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard *that*, he pursued David in the Wilderness of Maon. **26** Then Saul went on one side of the mountain, and David and his men on the other side of the mountain. So David made haste to get away from Saul, for Saul and his men were encircling David and his men to take them.

**27** But a messenger came to Saul, saying, “Hurry and come, for the Philistines have invaded the land!” **28** Therefore Saul returned from pursuing David, and went against the Philistines; so they called that place the Rock of Escape. **29** Then David went up from there and dwelt in strongholds at En Gedi. [God can keep you safe on the **mountain**]

## 1 Samuel 24

**1** Now it happened, when Saul had returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, “Take note! David *is* in the Wilderness of En Gedi.” **2** Then Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel, and went to seek David and his men on the Rocks of the Wild Goats. **3** So he came to the sheepfolds by the road, where there *was* a cave; and Saul went in to attend to his needs [read: go to the bathroom]. (David and his men were staying in the recesses of the cave.) **4** Then the men of David said to him, “This is the day of which the LORD said to you, ‘Behold, I will deliver your enemy into your hand, that you may do to him as it seems good to you.’” [Coffman: There is a warning in this that some providences are really not that at all. Jonah’s finding the ship to Tarshish ready to sail is another example.] And David arose and secretly cut off a corner of Saul’s robe. **5** Now it happened afterward that David’s heart troubled him because he had cut Saul’s robe. **6** And he said to his men, “The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the LORD’s anointed, to stretch out my hand

against him, seeing he *is* the anointed of the LORD.” **7** So David restrained his servants with *these* words, and did not allow them to rise against Saul. And Saul got up from the cave and went on *his* way. [At this point in David’s life, he knew that he would one day be king. David could have killed Saul to ‘help’ God along with God’s plan. However, it is never **right** to do wrong in order to get a chance to do **right** (or to fulfill prophecy).]

**8** David also arose afterward, went out of the cave, and called out to Saul, saying, “My lord the king!” And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed down. **9** And David said to Saul: “Why do you listen to the words of men who say, ‘Indeed David seeks your harm’? **10** Look, this day your eyes have seen that the LORD delivered you today into my hand in the cave, and *someone* urged *me* to kill you. But *my* eye spared you, and I said, ‘I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he *is* the LORD’s anointed.’ **11** Moreover, my father, see! Yes, see the corner of your robe in my hand! For in that I cut off the corner of your robe, and did not kill you, know and see that *there is* neither evil nor rebellion in my hand, and I have not sinned against you. Yet you hunt my life to take it. [Saul has seen a portion of his **robe** before in **1 Samuel 15:22-28**] **12** Let the LORD judge between you and me, and let the LORD avenge me on you. But my hand shall not be against you. **13** As the proverb of the ancients says, ‘Wickedness proceeds from the wicked.’ But my hand shall not be against you. **14** After whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom do you pursue? A dead dog? A flea? **15** Therefore let the LORD be judge, and judge between you and me, and see and plead my case, and deliver me out of your hand.” [Proverbs 10:12: Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all sins.]

**16** So it was, when David had finished speaking these words to Saul, that Saul said, “Is this your voice, my son David?” And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. **17** Then he said to David: “You *are* more righteous than I; for you have rewarded me with good, whereas I have rewarded you with evil. **18** And you have shown this day how you have dealt well with me; for when the LORD delivered me into your hand, you did not kill me. **19** For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him get away safely? Therefore may the LORD reward you with good for what you have done to me this day. **20** And now I know indeed that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand. **21** Therefore swear now to me by the LORD that you will not cut off my descendants after me, and that you will not destroy my name from my father’s house.”

**22** So David swore to Saul [David makes a promise he should not have made—and one that he is only partially able to fulfill in Mephibosheth (but he is not able to fulfill it in **2 Samuel 21:1-14**). And Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold. [God can keep you safe in the **cave**. This is what David wrote while in the cave: **Psalms 57**. David was patient with what God was taking him through so that David could be ready for what God was taking him to.]

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. The opposite of a fleshly response is good
2. God can keep you safe
3. Do right **right** now

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Go the opposite way
2. Give your **security** over to God
3. Ask God to show you the right thing to do right now



# The Rise of Israel: King David

---

## Review

Today we finish our seventh five-week series in the Old Testament. So far, in our study of the Old Testament, we have looked at how God chose Abraham and made a covenant with Abraham to bless him and the entire world through his descendants.

We looked at Abraham's son Isaac, Isaac's son Jacob, and Jacob's son Joseph. We have studied how God worked through the lives of Moses and Joshua to bring the children of Israel out of bondage in Egypt and how God used Moses to record the Law. We saw the nation of Israel led by judges and we saw the nation of Israel begin to possess the Promised Land.

In this five-week series, we saw the nation mature and get its first king—Saul. We saw Saul turn away from explicit obedience to God and we saw the dedication and wisdom of a young man named David. We saw David stand in the gap and defeat Goliath when all the other Israelite men were scared.

Now, many years after the anointing of the prophet Samuel (probably 15), David ascends the throne of Israel (first Judah, and then the entire nation) and becomes Israel's second king. The rise of Israel to a powerhouse of the region and a conqueror of the Promised Land is now complete. And David has it all.

## Preview: Having It All

Have you ever gotten what you always wanted? We have all heard the stories of the lottery winners who have gone bankrupt after getting, 'everything they always wanted.' In today's passage, we see David, King David, get everything—power, prestige, wealth, and victory over his enemies. Then, after he has everything, we see his heartbeat. We see what he does with all the power he could imagine.

Key thought: **What would I do if I had it all?**

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): 2 Samuel 5-7 (Author = Samuel?)

### 2 Samuel 5

#### David Reigns over All Israel

**1 Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron** [David was already king over one tribe, but there were 11 others] **and spoke, saying, "Indeed we are your bone and your flesh. 2 Also, in time past, when Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel out and brought them in; and the LORD said to you, 'You shall shepherd My people Israel, and be ruler over Israel.'" 3 Therefore all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD. And they anointed David king over Israel.** [1 Chronicles 12:23-40 talks about the fact that 340,000 men came to see this happen] **4 David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. 5 In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah.**



## The Conquest of Jerusalem

**6** And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land [David Guzik: Some 400 years after God commanded Israel to take the whole land, this city was still in Canaanite hands], who spoke to David, saying, "You shall not come in here; but the blind and the lame will repel you," thinking, "David cannot come in here." **7** Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion (that is, the City of David).

**8** Now David said on that day, "Whoever climbs up by way of the water shaft and defeats the Jebusites (the lame and the blind, *who are hated by David's soul*), *he shall be chief and captain.*" Therefore they say, "The blind and the lame shall not come into the house."

**9** Then David dwelt in the stronghold, and called it the City of David [Jerusalem is the City of David]. And David built all around from the Millo and inward. **10** So David went on and became great, and the LORD God of hosts was with him.

**11** Then Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters and masons. And they built David a house [talk about exports]. **12** So David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel, and that He had exalted His kingdom for the sake of His people Israel.

**13** And David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he had come from Hebron. Also more sons and daughters were born to David. **14** Now these *are* the names of those who were born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, **15** Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, **16** Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet. [David Guzik: Certainly David (and everyone else) saw these many children as God's sign of blessing upon David and his many wives. Yet most of the trouble to come in David's life comes from his relationship with women and from his children.]

## The Philistines Defeated

**17** Now when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to search for David. And David heard of it and went down to the stronghold. **18** The Philistines also went and deployed themselves in the Valley of Rephaim. **19** So David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will You deliver them into my hand?"

And the LORD said to David, "Go up, for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into your hand."

**20** So David went to Baal Perazim, and David defeated them there; and he said, "The LORD has broken through my enemies before me, like a breakthrough of water." Therefore he called the name of that place Baal Perazim. **21** And they left their images there, and David and his men carried them away.

**22** Then the Philistines went up once again and deployed themselves in the Valley of Rephaim.

**23** Therefore David inquired of the LORD, and He said, "You shall not go up; circle around behind them, and come upon them in front of the mulberry trees. **24** And it shall be, when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees [The sound of what? What in the world does the sound of marching in trees sound like? This is the sound of God at work.], then you shall advance quickly [When we know God is at work, we should act quickly]. For then the LORD will go out before you to strike the

camp of the Philistines.” **25** And David did so, as the LORD commanded him; and he drove back the Philistines from Geba as far as Gezer.

## 2 Samuel 6

### The Ark Brought to Jerusalem

**1** Again David gathered all *the* choice *men* of Israel, thirty thousand. **2** And David arose and went with all the people who *were* with him from Baale Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, whose name is called by the Name, the LORD of Hosts, who dwells *between* the cherubim. **3** So they set the ark of God on a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which *was* on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the new cart. **4** And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which *was* on the hill, accompanying the ark of God; and Ahio went before the ark. **5** Then David and all the house of Israel played *music* before the LORD on all kinds of *instruments of* fir wood, on harps, on stringed instruments, on tambourines, on sistrums, and on cymbals. [This sounds spiritual, but it does not align to God’s directions in [Exodus 25](#) on transporting the Ark of the Covenant.]

**6** And when they came to Nachon’s threshing floor, Uzzah put out *his hand* to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. **7** Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against Uzzah, and God struck him there for *his* error; and he died there by the ark of God. **8** And David became angry because of the LORD’s outbreak against Uzzah; and he called the name of the place Perez Uzzah to this day.

**9** David was afraid of the LORD that day; and he said, “How can the ark of the LORD come to me?” **10** So David would not move the ark of the LORD with him into the City of David; but David took it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. **11** The ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite three months. And the LORD blessed Obed-Edom and all his household. [Ray Steman: It was really David’s fault that this all happened. David had to learn the very bitter lesson that [sincerity](#) in serving God is never enough. Things must be done God’s way in accomplishing God’s will. David Guzik: This was a good thing done the wrong way.]

**12** Now it was told King David, saying, “The LORD has blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all that *belongs* to him, because of the ark of God.” So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with gladness. **13** And so it was, when those bearing the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, that he sacrificed oxen and fatted sheep. **14** Then David danced before the LORD with all *his* might; and David *was* wearing a linen ephod. **15** So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet.

**16** Now as the ark of the LORD came into the City of David, Michal, Saul’s daughter [probably David’s first wife], looked through a window and saw King David leaping and whirling before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart. **17** So they brought the ark of the LORD, and set it in its place in the midst of the tabernacle that David had erected for it. Then David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. **18** And when David had finished offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts. **19** Then he distributed among all the people, among the whole multitude of Israel, both the women and the men, to everyone a loaf of bread, a piece of *meat*, and a cake of raisins. So all the people departed, everyone to his house.

**20 Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, “How glorious was the king of Israel today, uncovering himself today in the eyes of the maids of his servants, as one of the base fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!”** [Problem: this is not a supportive wife]

**21 So David said to Michal, “It was before the LORD, who chose me instead of your father and all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel. Therefore I will play *music* before the LORD. 22 And I will be even more undignified than this, and will be humble in my own sight. But as for the maidservants of whom you have spoken, by them I will be held in honor.”** [Problem: this is not a supportive husband]

**23 Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death.** [Result: an empty marriage. **David Guzik: There is often barrenness in the life and ministry of the overly critical**]

## 2 Samuel 7

### God’s Covenant with David

**1 Now it came to pass when the king was dwelling in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies all around** [David has it **all**—wealth, power, a large family, and victory over his enemies],

**2 that the king said to Nathan the prophet, “See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains.”** [David Guzik: David wants to do more than God commands. This is a wonderful place to be in our relationship with God. Most of us are so stuck in the thinking, “How little can I do and still please the LORD?” that we never really want to do *more* than God commands.]

**3 Then Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that *is* in your heart, for the LORD *is* with you.”**

**4 But it happened that night that the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying, 5 “Go and tell My servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD: “Would you build a house for Me to dwell in? 6 For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought the children of Israel up from Egypt, even to this day, but have moved about in a tent and in a tabernacle. 7 Wherever I have moved about with all the children of Israel, have I ever spoken a word to anyone from the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, ‘Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?’”’ 8 Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts: [Be on the lookout for David’s part of this deal] “I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel. 9 And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a great name, like the name of the great men who *are* on the earth. 10 Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more; nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore, as previously, 11 since the time that I commanded judges *to be* over My people Israel, and have caused you to rest from all your enemies. Also the LORD tells you that He will make you a house** [David wants to build a house for God and God in return tells David that God will build David a house. You cannot out **give** God.].

12 “When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14 I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. 15 But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took *it* from Saul, whom I removed from before you. 16 And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.”” [So what did David have to do? **Nothing**. What did God have to do? **Everything**]

17 According to all these words and according to all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David.

### David's Thanksgiving to God

18 Then King David went in and sat before the LORD; and he said: “Who *am* I, O Lord GOD? And what is my house, that You have brought me this far? 19 And yet this was a small thing in Your sight, O Lord GOD; and You have also spoken of Your servant's [How many times does “Your servant” appear? **10**] house for a great while to come. *Is* this the manner of man, O Lord GOD? 20 Now what more can David say to You? For You, Lord GOD, know Your servant. 21 For Your word's sake, and according to Your own heart, You have done all these great things, to make Your servant know *them*. 22 Therefore You are great, O Lord GOD. For *there is* none like You, nor *is there any* God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears. 23 And who *is* like Your people, like Israel, the one nation on the earth whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people, to make for Himself a name—and to do for Yourself great and awesome deeds for Your land—before Your people whom You redeemed for Yourself from Egypt, the nations, and their gods? 24 For You have made Your people Israel Your very own people forever; and You, LORD, have become their God.

25 “Now, O LORD God, the word which You have spoken concerning Your servant and concerning his house, establish *it* forever and do as You have said. 26 So let Your name be magnified forever, saying, ‘The LORD of hosts *is* the God over Israel.’ And let the house of Your servant David be established before You. 27 For You, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, have revealed *this* to Your servant, saying, ‘I will build you a house.’ Therefore Your servant has found it in his heart to pray this prayer to You.

28 “And now, O Lord GOD, You are God, and Your words are true, and You have promised this goodness to Your servant. 29 Now therefore, let it please You to bless the house of Your servant, that it may continue before You forever; for You, O Lord GOD, have spoken *it*, and with Your blessing let the house of Your servant be blessed forever.” [This is a prayer of **humility** and we get to see inside David's heart]

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. You might **not** get it all
2. You might get **some** of it
3. You might get it all

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Don't **wish** your life away—get busy now **being** the person God wants you to be

# The Essential 100

## A Bible overview plan for 2011-2012

The Essential 100 (E100) is a systematic approach that guides readers through the big picture of the Bible. It is a carefully selected list of short Bible passages—50 from the Old Testament and 50 from the New Testament. Each testament is broken up into ten, five-week series. We will move from Old to New Testaments every five weeks. My goal is to teach three of the five lessons in every series.

The E100 in Sunday school: We will REAP (read, explain, apply, and personalize) one passage each week and finish a series every five weeks. Each lesson will include a key verse for memorization. At the end of two years, we will have covered the essential 100 passages in the Bible.

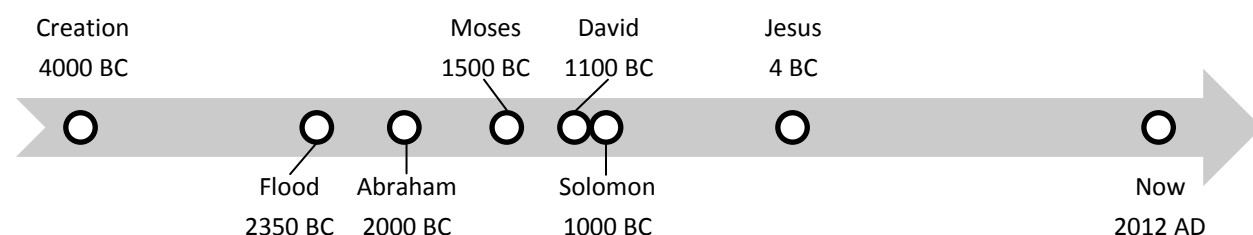
Additional information: To learn more about The E100 program and to obtain additional resources, visit [e100challenge.com](http://e100challenge.com). Our Sunday school website is [stuartheights.org/sundayschool](http://stuartheights.org/sundayschool).

## The Schedule: The Fall of Israel

This is our eighth five-week series in the Old Testament. So far, we have looked at In the Beginning, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, The Story of Joseph, Moses and the Exodus, The Law and the Land, and The Judges, and The Rise of Israel. Now we shift to The Fall of Israel.

Date	Lesson	Key Verse(s)	Passage	Speaker
May 27	David and Bathsheba	2 Samuel 12:9-10	2 Samuel 11:1-12:25	Jim Fleming
June 3	King Solomon	1 Kings 3:27-28	1 Kings 2-3	Jim Fleming
June 10	Solomon's Temple	1 Kings 8:29-30	1 Kings 8:1-9:9	Terry Bolden
June 17	Elijah and the Prophets of Baal	1 Kings 18:20-21	1 Kings 16:29-19:18	Jim Fleming
June 24	The Fall of Jerusalem	2 Kings 25:10-11	2 Kings 25	Jim Fleming

Assuming a literal interpretation of Bible dates, the following timeline is close:



For 2,500 years, the patriarchs received revelation from God passed it on orally to those around them. Around 1450 BC, the Law was given and Moses and Joshua administered it. After them, judges filled the leadership needs for Israel. Prophets intermittently helped Israel before she rose to regional power under the direction of kings (Saul and David). As soon as she was in power, though, the fall began.

# The Fall of Israel: David and Bathsheba

---

## Review

The reality is that no system of government is stable long-term except a theocracy with Yahweh ruling. Every other system of government is a **shadow** of what King Jesus ruling will be one day.

## Preview: My Precious

In *The Lord of the Rings*, Gollum refers to the one ring of power as, “My precious.” Have you ever owned something that you would kill for? Gollum did. David saw keeping his sin with Bathsheba a valuable secret worth killing for. David tried to hold on to his precious secret as well, but the messy nature of his sin could not be hidden.

Key thought: **Sin** has disastrous impacts, contaminates everything, and cannot be hidden

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): 2 Samuel 11:1-12:25 (Author = Unknown)

### 2 Samuel 11

#### David, Bathsheba, and Uriah

**1 It happened in the spring of the year, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab [David’s military commander] and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the people of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem.** [You do not have to be a Bible scholar to see this text paints a poor picture of David—David was **not** where he was supposed to be.]

**2 Then it happened one evening that David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king’s house. And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to behold** [David should have immediately looked away]. **3 So David sent and inquired about the woman** [example: a child and a lollypop]. **And someone said** [this ‘someone’ is neither David nor Bathsheba—so someone else knows], **“Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam** [one of David’s mighty men—**2 Samuel 23:34**; Eliam’s father was Ahithophel, who was one of David’s counselors—**2 Samuel 23:34, 2 Samuel 15:12**], **the wife of Uriah the Hittite?”** **4 Then David sent messengers** [plural—now at least four people know], **and took her; and she came to him, and he lay with her, for she was cleansed from her impurity** [an observant Old Testament Jew would have read between the lines in this text and would have known that Bathsheba was bathing due to the fact that her cycle had just finished and she was becoming ritually clean]; **and she returned to her house.** **5 And the woman conceived; so she sent and told David, and said, “I am with child.”** [David has the lollypop all over his mouth and his hands at this point—he simply needs to come clean. **David Guzik: David’s practice of adding wives showed a lack of romantic restraint and an indulgence of his passions. This corrupt seed, sown long ago, has grown unchecked long enough and will now begin to bear bitter fruit.**]

**6 Then David sent to Joab, saying, "Send me Uriah the Hittite."** [This was the right thing to do—to face the problem like a man and confess to God and to Uriah. **Leviticus 20:10** was clear that both David and Bathsheba should die for this sin, so David should confess and come clean.] **And Joab sent Uriah to David. 7 When Uriah had come to him, David asked how Joab was doing, and how the people were doing, and how the war prospered** [this is our first sign that David is about to cover things up—David **avoids** a crucial conversation with Uriah]. **8 And David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." So Uriah departed from the king's house, and a gift of food from the king followed him** [David is trying to get Uriah to spend some time at home so Uriah will sleep with Bathsheba and so David can cover up his adultery]. **9 But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. 10 So when they told David, saying, "Uriah did not go down to his house," David said to Uriah, "Did you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?"**

**11 And Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah are dwelling in tents, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are encamped in the open fields. Shall I then go to my house to eat and drink, and to lie with my wife? As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do this thing."** [Wow! Uriah put his solidarity with his soldiers before his own desires and was one with his brothers (**Romans 12:15-16**).]

**12 Then David said to Uriah, "Wait here today also, and tomorrow I will let you depart." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next** [David is just killing time trying to get Uriah to sleep with Bathsheba]. **13 Now when David called him, he ate and drank before him; and he made him drunk. And at evening he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but he did not go down to his house.** [Uriah puts his reputation before himself even when he was drunk. David's sin is growing—add drunkenness to his adultery.]

**14 In the morning it happened that David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah** [Uriah was so trustworthy that David had Uriah communicate Uriah's own **death** sentence]. **15 And he wrote in the letter, saying, "Set Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retreat from him, that he may be struck down and die."** [John Trapp: David was better while a servant than when a king; for being a servant, he feared to kill Saul his adversary, but becoming a king, he basely slew his most faithful friend and dutiful subject] **16 So it was, while Joab besieged the city, that he assigned Uriah to a place where he knew there were valiant men. 17 Then the men of the city came out and fought with Joab. And some of the people of the servants of David fell; and Uriah the Hittite died also.** [Now David has allowed Joab to be an accomplice in this murderous scheme. Joab should have **objected**—no matter the cost. David's sin is growing—add murder to his adultery and drunkenness.]

**18 Then Joab sent and told David all the things concerning the war, 19 and charged the messenger, saying, "When you have finished telling the matters of the war to the king, 20 if it happens that the king's wrath rises, and he says to you: 'Why did you approach so near to the city when you fought? Did you not know that they would shoot from the wall? 21 Who struck Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? Was it not a woman who cast a piece of a millstone on him from the wall, so that he died in Thebez? Why did you go near the wall?'—then you shall say, 'Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.'"**



**22** So the messenger went, and came and told David all that Joab had sent by him. **23** And the messenger said to David, “Surely the men prevailed against us and came out to us in the field; then we drove them back as far as the entrance of the gate. **24** The archers shot from the wall at your servants; and *some* of the king’s servants are dead, and your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.”

**25** Then David said to the messenger, “Thus you shall say to Joab: ‘Do not let this thing displease you, for the sword devours one as well as another. Strengthen your attack against the city, and overthrow it.’ **So encourage him.**” [David’s sin is growing—add treachery to his adultery, drunkenness, and murder.]

**26** When the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband. **27** And when her mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son [David somehow believes that more women living under the same roof will benefit him—sin impacts our judgment as well]. **But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD** [the **divine** commentary].

## 2 Samuel 11

### Nathan’s Parable and David’s Confession

**1** Then the LORD sent Nathan to David [God will **never** leave His children alone]. And he came to him, and said to him: “There were two men in one city, one rich and the other poor. **2** The rich *man* had exceedingly many flocks and herds. **3** But the poor *man* had nothing, except one little ewe lamb which he had bought and nourished; and it grew up together with him and with his children. It ate of his own food and drank from his own cup and lay in his bosom; and it was like a daughter to him. **4** And a traveler came to the rich man, who refused to take from his own flock and from his own herd to prepare one for the wayfaring man who had come to him; but he took the poor man’s lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him.”

**5** So David’s anger was greatly aroused against the man, and he said to Nathan, “As the LORD lives, the man who has done this shall surely die! **6** And he shall restore fourfold for the lamb, because he did this thing and because he had no pity.” [Fourfold restoration was commanded by **Exodus 22:1**, so David gets religious. **David Guzik: David knew the words of the Bible but was distant from the Author.**]

**7** Then Nathan said to David, “You *are* the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel: ‘I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. **8** I gave you your master’s house and your master’s wives into your keeping, and gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if *that had been* too little, I also would have given you much more! **9** Why have you despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon. **10** Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.’ **11** Thus says the LORD: ‘Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes and give *them* to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. **12** For you did *it* secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun.’” [Do you have friends that could speak that plainly to you?]

**13 So David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.”** [Finally, David starts down the right path. David wrote **Psalm 51** at this time in his life.]

**And Nathan said to David, “The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die. 14 However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also *who is born to you shall surely die.*”** [It is hard to reconcile that statement with a loving God, but know that God is just and right in all that He does] **15 Then Nathan departed to his house.**

### The Death of David's Son

**And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and it became ill. 16 David therefore pleaded with God for the child, and David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground. 17 So the elders of his house arose *and went* to him, to raise him up from the ground. But he would not, nor did he eat food with them. 18 Then on the seventh day it came to pass that the child died.** [David Guzik: This illustrates an important principle: *even when sin is forgiven a price must be paid.* God does not simply pass over or excuse our sin. It is forgiven and a price is paid. Often an **innocent** party pays the price for forgiveness.] **And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead. For they said, “Indeed, while the child was alive, we spoke to him, and he would not heed our voice. How can we tell him that the child is dead? He may do some harm!”**

**19 When David saw that his servants were whispering, David perceived that the child was dead. Therefore David said to his servants, “Is the child dead?”**

**And they said, “He is dead.”**

**20 So David arose from the ground, washed and anointed himself, and changed his clothes; and he went into the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then he went to his own house; and when he requested, they set food before him, and he ate. 21 Then his servants said to him, “What is this that you have done? You fasted and wept for the child *while he was* alive, but when the child died, you arose and ate food.”**

**22 And he said, “While the child was alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, ‘Who can tell *whether* the LORD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?’ 23 But now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him [i.e., I shall die too], but he shall not return to me.”**

### Solomon Is Born

**24 Then David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in to her and lay with her. So she bore a son, and he called his name Solomon. Now the LORD loved him, 25 and He sent *word* by the hand of Nathan the prophet: So he called his name Jedidiah, because of the LORD.**

Challenge: Sin is more complicated than we can imagine, so just confess, do not try to cover it up

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. Sin is **messy**
2. God will chase His children
3. Forgiveness is available

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Hate sin
2. Look for God's **messengers**
3. Confess quickly

# The Fall of Israel: King Solomon

---

## Preview: The Godfather and the Father God

In *The Godfather*, Michael Corleone reminisces about his father's advice, "Keep your friends close, but your enemies closer." In these two chapters (1 Kings 2-3), Solomon is introduced to politics, discernment, and wisdom in much the same way. In transitioning his kingdom to Solomon, David instructs him to wipe out his enemies. Some of these actions are righteous; some are not.

Key thought: No matter how messy, God can bring **peace** into any situation despite those involved

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): 1 Kings 2-3 (Author = Unknown)

### 1 Kings 2

#### David's Instructions to Solomon

**1** Now the days of David drew near that he should die, and he charged Solomon his son [with Bathsheba—Solomon was most likely between **12** and **18** at the time], saying: **2** "I go the way of all the earth; be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man. **3** And keep the charge of the LORD your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn [1 Kings 2:2-3 is often quoted as a blessing by Jewish fathers to their sons on the day of their twelfth birthdays—the day of their bar mitzvahs]; **4** that the LORD may fulfill His word which He spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your sons take heed to their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul,' He said, 'you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.'

**5** "Moreover you know also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, and what he did to the two commanders of the armies of Israel, to Abner the son of Ner and Amasa the son of Jether, whom he killed. And he shed the blood of war in peacetime, and put the blood of war on his belt that was around his waist, and on his sandals that were on his feet. **6** Therefore do according to your wisdom, and do not let his gray hair go down to the grave in peace. [David's advice: kill **Joab** since he killed in peacetime]

**7** "But show kindness to the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be among those who eat at your table, for so they came to me when I fled from Absalom your brother.

**8** "And see, you have with you Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite from Bahurim, who cursed me with a malicious curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim. But he came down to meet me at the Jordan, and I swore to him by the LORD, saying, 'I will not put you to death with the sword.' **9** Now therefore, do not hold him guiltless, for you are a wise man and know what you ought to do to him; but bring his gray hair down to the grave with blood." [David's advice: kill Shimei because he **cursed**. David is going back on a promise that David made to Shimei in 2 Samuel 19:16-23.]

## Death of David

**10** So David rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David. **11** The period that David reigned over Israel *was* forty years; seven years he reigned in Hebron, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years. **12** Then Solomon sat on the throne of his father David; and his kingdom was firmly established [i.e., there were no challenges to his throne].

## Solomon Executes Adonijah

**13** Now Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon. So she said, “Do you come peaceably?”

And he said, “Peaceably.” **14** Moreover he said, “I have something to say to you.”

And she said, “Say it.”

**15** Then he said, “You know that the kingdom was mine, and all Israel had set their expectations on me, that I should reign. However, the kingdom has been turned over, and has become my brother’s; for it was his from the LORD. **16** Now I ask one petition of you; do not deny me.”

And she said to him, “Say it.”

**17** Then he said, “Please speak to King Solomon, for he will not refuse you, that he may give me Abishag the Shunammite as wife.” [Coffman: taking one of the king’s **harem** was the equivalent of demanding his throne]

**18** So Bathsheba said, “Very well, I will speak for you to the king.”

**19** Bathsheba therefore went to King Solomon, to speak to him for Adonijah. And the king rose up to meet her and bowed down to her, and sat down on his throne and had a throne set for the king’s mother; so she sat at his right hand. **20** Then she said, “I desire one small petition of you; do not refuse me.”

And the king said to her, “Ask it, my mother, for I will not refuse you.”

**21** So she said, “Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah your brother as wife.”

**22** And King Solomon answered and said to his mother, “Now why do you ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? Ask for him the kingdom also—for he *is* my older brother—for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah.” **23** Then King Solomon swore by the LORD, saying, “May God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah has not spoken this word against his own life! **24** Now therefore, *as* the LORD lives, who has confirmed me and set me on the throne of David my father, and who has established a house for me, as He promised, Adonijah shall be put to death today!”

**25** So King Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah [Benaiah is Solomon’s hit man] the son of Jehoiada; and he struck him down, and he died. [Solomon’s first action as king is to **execute** Adonijah]

### Abiathar Exiled, Joab Executed

**26** And to Abiathar the priest the king said, “Go to Anathoth, to your own fields, for you *are* deserving of death; but I will not put you to death at this time, because you carried the ark of the Lord GOD before my father David, and because you were afflicted every time my father was afflicted.” **27** So Solomon removed Abiathar from being priest to the LORD, that he might fulfill the word of the LORD which He spoke concerning the house of Eli at Shiloh [God made a promise to Eli 80 years prior that Eli’s family would be removed as high priest. Solomon’s second act as king is to **banish** Abiathar (the man who sided with Solomon’s brother in the power struggle at the end of David’s life). **The New Layman’s Bible Commentary: This established a precedent of the high priesthood’s being at the disposal of the king, another step down the slippery slope of being like the nations around them.**].

**28** Then news came to Joab, for Joab had defected to Adonijah, though he had not defected to Absalom. So Joab fled to the tabernacle of the LORD, and took hold of the horns of the altar. **29** And King Solomon was told, “Joab has fled to the tabernacle of the LORD; there *he is*, by the altar.” Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, “Go, strike him down.” **30** So Benaiah went to the tabernacle of the LORD, and said to him, “Thus says the king, ‘Come out!’”

And he said, “No, but I will die here.” And Benaiah brought back word to the king, saying, “Thus said Joab, and thus he answered me.”

**31** Then the king said to him, “Do as he has said, and strike him down and bury him, that you may take away from me and from the house of my father the innocent blood which Joab shed. **32** So the LORD will return his blood on his head, because he struck down two men more righteous and better than he, and killed them with the sword—Abner the son of Ner, the commander of the army of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, the commander of the army of Judah—though my father David did not know *it*. **33** Their blood shall therefore return upon the head of Joab and upon the head of his descendants forever. But upon David and his descendants, upon his house and his throne, there shall be peace forever from the LORD.”

**34** So Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up and struck and killed him; and he was buried in his own house in the wilderness. **35** The king put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada in his place over the army, and the king put Zadok the priest in the place of Abiathar. [Solomon’s third act as king is to **kill** Joab—his father’s military commander and leader of the army]

### Shimei Executed

**36** Then the king sent and called for Shimei, and said to him, “Build yourself a house in Jerusalem and dwell there, and do not go out from there anywhere. **37** For it shall be, on the day you go out and cross the Brook Kidron, know for certain you shall surely die; your blood shall be on your own head.” [This boundary appears to be an attempt at mercy by the young king Solomon]

**38** And Shimei said to the king, “The saying *is* good. As my lord the king has said, so your servant will do.” So Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days.

**39** Now it happened at the end of three years, that two slaves of Shimei ran away to Achish the son of Maachah, king of Gath. And they told Shimei, saying, “Look, your slaves *are* in Gath!” **40** So Shimei arose, saddled his donkey, and went to Achish at Gath to seek his slaves. And Shimei went and brought his slaves from Gath. **41** And Solomon was told that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath and had come back. **42** Then the king sent and called for Shimei, and said to him, “Did I not make you swear by the LORD, and warn you, saying, ‘Know for certain that on the day you go out and travel anywhere, you shall surely die’? And you said to me, ‘The word I have heard *is* good.’” **43** Why then have you not kept the oath of the LORD and the commandment that I gave you?” **44** The king said moreover to Shimei, “You know, as your heart acknowledges, all the wickedness that you did to my father David; therefore the LORD will return your wickedness on your own head. **45** But King Solomon *shall be* blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before the LORD forever.”

**46** So the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he went out and struck him down, and he died. Thus the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon. [Coffman: Indeed it was! But the reader feels exhausted rather than satisfied. Solomon is finally at **rest** from his internal enemies. It is seriously in doubt as to whether or not Solomon was justified in all of these killings. It cannot be in doubt, however, that had he not killed these men, he would have forever been looking over his own shoulder—and the shoulders of his children. Coffman: What is really visible here is the evil system that inevitably accompanied Israel’s fate under that king which they had demanded. God had warned them that their monarchy would result in all kinds of abuses by their kings.]

## 1 Kings 3

### Solomon Requests Wisdom

**1** Now Solomon made a treaty with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and married Pharaoh’s daughter [460 years after the slavery ended, Egypt and Israel are allies]; then he brought her to the City of David until he had finished building his own house [which took 13 years], and the house of the LORD [which took 20 years], and the wall all around Jerusalem [There is a substantial difference between a tent and a house. The tabernacle was a tent. The tabernacle was mobile. The temple was a house. The temple could not move. One implies permanence (temple) and one implies nomadic activity (tabernacle).]. **2** Meanwhile the people sacrificed at the high places, because there was no house built for the name of the LORD until those days. **3** And Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David, except that he sacrificed and burned incense at the high places [This verse is a picture of Solomon’s entire life. The scriptures say that Solomon loved two things in his life: the ‘**LORD**’ (1 Kings 3:3), and ‘many foreign women’ (1 Kings 11:1). The high places went right alongside the many strange women. This is the example that the young king Solomon was setting for the nation: idolatry.].

**4** Now the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place: Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar [The only problem with this is Leviticus 17:8-9. The Law forbade any burnt offering that was not brought to the tabernacle.]. **5** At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, “Ask! What shall I give you?”

**6** And Solomon said: “You have shown great mercy to Your servant David my father, because he walked before You in truth, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with You; You have continued this great kindness for him, and You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as *it is* this day. **7** Now, O LORD my God, You have made Your servant king instead of my father David, but *I am a little child* [literally, a young boy]; I do not know *how* to go out or come in [I do not know what I am doing. *Have you ever had a job where you did not know what you were doing?*]. **8** And Your servant *is in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people, too numerous to be numbered or counted* [perhaps a slight head-nod to the fact that Solomon would not repeat the sin of his father of counting the people]. **9** Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart [a **listening** heart—this is not wisdom] **to judge Your people** [This is wisdom—the doing part. The fear of God is the beginning of knowledge. Knowledge + time + opportunity will yield maturity. Maturity yields discernment (knowing the right thing to do). Discernment yields wisdom (doing the right thing).], **that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?”** [Solomon asked for a listening heart so he could know the difference between right and wrong so he could judge accordingly]

**10** The speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. **11** Then God said to him: “Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice, **12** behold, I have done according to your words; see, I have given you a wise and understanding heart [a heart (or passion) that is strong enough to do the right thing once he knew the right thing], **so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you.** **13** And I have also given you what you have not asked: both riches and honor, so that there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days. **14** So if you walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days.”

**15** Then Solomon awoke; and indeed it had been a dream. And he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, offered up burnt offerings, offered peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants. [It was a new day.]

### Solomon's Wise Judgment

**16** Now two women *who were* harlots came to the king, and stood before him. **17** And one woman said, “O my lord, this woman and I dwell in the same house; and I gave birth while she *was* in the house. **18** Then it happened, the third day after I had given birth, that this woman also gave birth. And *we were* together; no one *was* with us in the house, except the two of us in the house. **19** And this woman's son died in the night, because she lay on him. **20** So she arose in the middle of the night and took my son from my side, while your maidservant slept, and laid him in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom. **21** And when I rose in the morning to nurse my son, there he was, dead. But when I had examined him in the morning, indeed, he was not my son whom I had borne.”

**22** Then the other woman said, “No! But the living one *is* my son, and the dead one *is* your son.”

And the first woman said, “No! But the dead one *is* your son, and the living one *is* my son.”

Thus they spoke before the king.



**23** And the king said, "The one says, 'This *is* my son, who lives, and your son *is* the dead one'; and the other says, 'No! But your son *is* the dead one, and my son *is* the living one.'" **24** Then the king said, "Bring me a sword." So they brought a sword before the king. **25** And the king said, "Divide the living child in two, and give half to one, and half to the other."

**26** Then the woman whose son *was* living spoke to the king, for she yearned with compassion for her son; and she said, "O my lord, give her the living child, and by no means kill him!"

But the other said, "Let him be neither mine nor yours, *but* divide *him*."

**27** So the king answered and said, "Give the first woman the living child, and by no means kill him; she *is* his mother."

**28** And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had rendered; and they feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God *was* in him to administer justice.

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. It takes wisdom to lead well (a heart that is strong enough to do right once right is known)
2. God is not in a hurry (we never get away with anything)
3. God works in spite of our sin and our attempts to 'help' His will be accomplished

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. **Esther Archer: Ask God for wisdom then practice using it**
2. Live in the knowledge that God will make it all right in the end (and do not help God)
3. Confess **quickly** (sin only gets worse)

# The Fall of Israel: Solomon's Temple

---

## Preview: Pictures & Passages

### 1 Kings 6:21-22

Jerusalem itself is elevated (i.e., all of scripture always talks about going “up” to Jerusalem) and the temple mount near its apex. Solomon's temple was approximately 100 feet in height and overlaid with gold. Clouds are nearly non-existent year-round. Imagine traveling to the temple from a distance to worship Jehovah, and the glory of the sun reflecting off the temple for miles before you arrive. The attitude of worship would start far off and build as you drew closer and closer to the presence of God. I hope that this reflects our lives today as we draw closer to God, our worship heightens, and our view becomes filled more and more with the glory of God.

Although our focus will be on the temple that Solomon built for God, let us start with laying some groundwork. God devotes half of the book of **1 Kings** to the life of Solomon. Why? All of scripture points us to Christ and Solomon typifies Christ in several ways. The wisdom he is most famous for points us to **Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God (1 Corinthians 1:30)**. Solomon's fame, glory, wealth, and honor foreshadow Christ in His kingdom (**Daniel 7, Zechariah 2**). Solomon's rule brings knowledge, peace, and worship (**Micah 4, Isaiah 2**). However, it was, is, and always shall be about Jesus. During His first coming to earth, Jesus said of Himself, “**A greater than Solomon is here**” (**Matthew 12:42**).

**1 Kings 1-2:** Appointment and solidification of Solomon as king

**1 Kings 3-4:** Wisdom and administration of Solomon

**1 Kings 5-6:** Construction of the temple

**1 Kings 7:** Construction of the temple furnishings (small portion about Solomon's house)

**1 Kings 8:** Dedication of the temple

Solomon's life has been predominately devoted to God. Now the temple is finished (after twenty years of construction), and Solomon draws people together to dedicate it with a sermon and a prayer. This dedication, as well as his focus and pointing of the people to Yahweh reveals the apex of his glory. Shortly following this begins Solomon's decline into disobedience and idolatry.

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): 1 Kings 8:1-9:9 (Author = Unknown)

### 1 Kings 8

#### The Ark Brought into the Temple

**1 Now Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel, to King Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the City of David, which is Zion. 2 Therefore all the men of Israel assembled with King**

**Solomon at the feast in the month of Ethanim, which is the seventh month.** [Solomon calls the who's who of Israel to Jerusalem to dedicate the temple and worship Yahweh] **3 So all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark. 4 Then they brought up the ark of the LORD, the tabernacle of meeting, and all the holy furnishings that were in the tabernacle. The priests and the Levites brought them up. 5 Also King Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel who were assembled with him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen that could not be counted or numbered for multitude. 6 Then the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place, into the inner sanctuary of the temple, to the Most Holy Place, under the wings of the cherubim. 7 For the cherubim spread their two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubim overshadowed the ark and its poles. 8 The poles extended so that the ends of the poles could be seen from the holy place, in front of the inner sanctuary; but they could not be seen from outside. And they are there to this day. 9 Nothing was in the ark except the two tablets of stone which Moses put there at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.** [The ark is transferred to the Holy of Holies in the temple. What do verses 8-9 mean? With some slight variations, there is a great deal of agreement among theologians. The staves were not removed, but were "drawn out." Old Jewish writings say that they were drawn to one side of the ark poking at the veil "like the breasts of a woman." Why draw them to one side without removing them entirely from the ark? They were a constant reminder of the mode of transport (only to be carried) and remained with the ark. In addition, the only light in the holy place was the light from the menorah. In the Holy of Holies, there were no windows, nor light added. **Psalms 97:2a** says **Clouds and darkness surround him.** Many speculate it was completely black in the Holy of Holies. Only once a year did anyone enter, and this was the High Priest in order to sprinkle blood on the mercy seat in atonement for the sins of the nation. Therefore, the High Priest would use these staves as guides to help lead him directly to the mercy seat.]

**10 And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, 11 so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD.** [Shekinah Glory fills the temple. God has acknowledged His acceptance of the work done for His glory.]

**12 Then Solomon spoke:** [Solomon breaks out preaching. He praises God before the people for what God (not Solomon) has done. He reminds the people of God's faithfulness in delivering them from bondage and His continued faithfulness in fulfilling His promises. What God says He will do, He will do! The temple itself is a fulfillment of Jehovah's promise to David.]

**"The LORD said He would dwell in the dark cloud.**

**13 I have surely built You an exalted house,  
And a place for You to dwell in forever."**

### **Solomon's Speech at Completion of the Work**

**14 Then the king turned around and blessed the whole assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel was standing. 15 And he said: "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, who spoke with His mouth to my father David, and with His hand has fulfilled it, saying, 16 'Since the day that I brought My people Israel out of Egypt, I have chosen no city from any tribe of Israel in which to build a house, that My**

name might be there; but I chose David to be over My people Israel.' **17** Now it was in the heart of my father David to build a temple for the name of the LORD God of Israel. **18** But the LORD said to my father David, 'Whereas it was in your heart to build a temple for My name, you did well that it was in your heart. **19** Nevertheless you shall not build the temple, but your son who will come from your body, he shall build the temple for My name.' **20** So the LORD has fulfilled His word which He spoke; and I have filled the position of my father David, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised; and I have built a temple for the name of the LORD God of Israel. **21** And there I have made a place for the ark, in which *is* the covenant of the LORD which He made with our fathers, when He brought them out of the land of Egypt."

### Solomon's Prayer of Dedication

Solomon prays. Solomon humbles himself before God and the congregation of Israel (verse 54.) He focuses on four things: who God is (Forgiver of sin), what God has done (delivered them—also from sin), what God does (forgives sin), and what God is going to do for His chosen people (forgive sin.) **Do you see a theme in Solomon's prayer? How important in your life is it that God has forgiven you? You want to really fall in love with God?** Bring to the surface of your thoughts what He has done for you, where you were without Him, and where you would be had He not forgiven you.

**22** Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands toward heaven; **23** and he said: "LORD God of Israel, *there is* no God in heaven above or on earth below like You, who keep *Your* covenant and mercy with Your servants who walk before You with all their hearts. **24** You have kept what You promised Your servant David my father; You have both spoken with Your mouth and fulfilled *it* with Your hand, as *it is* this day. **25** Therefore, LORD God of Israel, now keep what You promised Your servant David my father, saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man sit before Me on the throne of Israel, only if your sons take heed to their way, that they walk before Me as you have walked before Me.' **26** And now I pray, O God of Israel, let Your word come true, which You have spoken to Your servant David my father.

**27** "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built! **28** Yet regard the prayer of Your servant and his supplication, O LORD my God, and listen to the cry and the prayer which Your servant is praying before You today: **29** that Your eyes may be open toward this temple night and day, toward the place of which You said, 'My name shall be there,' that You may hear the prayer which Your servant makes toward this place. **30** And may You hear the supplication of Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. Hear in heaven Your dwelling place; and when You hear, forgive.

**31** "When anyone sins against his neighbor, and is forced to take an oath, and comes *and* takes an oath before Your altar in this temple, **32** then hear in heaven, and act, and judge Your servants, condemning the wicked, bringing his way on his head, and justifying the righteous by giving him according to his righteousness.

**33** “When Your people Israel are defeated before an enemy because they have sinned against You, and when they turn back to You and confess Your name, and pray and make supplication to You in this temple, **34** then hear in heaven, and forgive the sin of Your people Israel, and bring them back to the land which You gave to their fathers.

**35** “When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against You, when they pray toward this place and confess Your name, and turn from their sin because You afflict them, **36** then hear in heaven, and forgive the sin of Your servants, Your people Israel, that You may teach them the good way in which they should walk; and send rain on Your land which You have given to Your people as an inheritance.

**37** “When there is famine in the land, pestilence *or* blight *or* mildew, locusts *or* grasshoppers; when their enemy besieges them in the land of their cities; whatever plague *or* whatever sickness *there is*; **38** whatever prayer, whatever supplication is made by anyone, *or* by all Your people Israel, when each one knows the plague of his own heart, and spreads out his hands toward this temple: **39** then hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and forgive, and act, and give to everyone according to all his ways, whose heart You know (for You alone know the hearts of all the sons of men), **40** that they may fear You all the days that they live in the land which You gave to our fathers.

**41** “Moreover, concerning a foreigner, who *is* not of Your people Israel, but has come from a far country for Your name's sake **42** (for they will hear of Your great name and Your strong hand and Your outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this temple, **43** hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, that all peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You, as *do* Your people Israel, and that they may know that this temple which I have built is called by Your name.

**44** “When Your people go out to battle against their enemy, wherever You send them, and when they pray to the LORD toward the city which You have chosen and the temple which I have built for Your name, **45** then hear in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause.

**46** “When they sin against You (for *there is* no one who does not sin), and You become angry with them and deliver them to the enemy, and they take them captive to the land of the enemy, far or near; **47** yet when they come to themselves in the land where they were carried captive, and repent, and make supplication to You in the land of those who took them captive, saying, ‘We have sinned and done wrong, we have committed wickedness’; **48** and *when* they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies who led them away captive, and pray to You toward their land which You gave to their fathers, the city which You have chosen and the temple which I have built for Your name: **49** then hear in heaven Your dwelling place their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause, **50** and forgive Your people who have sinned against You, and all their transgressions which they have transgressed against You; and grant them compassion before those who took them captive, that they may have compassion on them **51** (for they *are* Your people and Your inheritance, whom You brought out of Egypt, out of the iron furnace), **52** that Your eyes may be open to the supplication of Your servant and the supplication of Your people Israel, to listen to

them whenever they call to You. **53** For You separated them from among all the peoples of the earth to be Your inheritance, as You spoke by Your servant Moses, when You brought our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord God."

### Solomon Blesses the Assembly

**54** And so it was, when Solomon had finished praying all this prayer and supplication to the LORD, that he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven. [Solomon's challenge to the people: Walk with God! Verse 58 is key in that it is not our work or effort, but God's. There are no perfect people in the scripture, but there are many who walked with God. The difference with these is that when they failed or were knocked down, they got back up seeking the face of God ready to yield again to His will and way.] **55** Then he stood and blessed all the assembly of Israel with a loud voice, saying: **56** "Blessed be the LORD, who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He promised. There has not failed one word of all His good promise, which He promised through His servant Moses. **57** May the LORD our God be with us, as He was with our fathers. May He not leave us nor forsake us, **58** that He may incline our hearts to Himself, to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, which He commanded our fathers. **59** And may these words of mine, with which I have made supplication before the LORD, be near the LORD our God day and night, that He may maintain the cause of His servant and the cause of His people Israel, as each day may require, **60** that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD is God; *there is no other*. **61** Let your heart therefore be loyal to the LORD our God, to walk in His statutes and keep His commandments, as at this day."

### Solomon Dedicates the Temple

Rejoicing of Israel. When the king got excited about God, the people got excited about God. Attitudes (including worship) are contagious. You will incite people to do what you put your heart to. **Are you inciting your circle of influence to draw unto God, or are you leading them away?**

**62** Then the king and all Israel with him offered sacrifices before the LORD. **63** And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered to the LORD, twenty-two thousand bulls and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the LORD. **64** On the same day the king consecrated the middle of the court that *was* in front of the house of the LORD; for there he offered burnt offerings, grain offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings, because the bronze altar that *was* before the LORD *was* too small to receive the burnt offerings, the grain offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings.

**65** At that time Solomon held a feast, and all Israel with him, a great assembly from the entrance of Hamath to the Brook of Egypt, before the LORD our God, seven days and seven *more* days—fourteen days. **66** On the eighth day he sent the people away; and they blessed the king, and went to their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the good that the LORD had done for His servant David, and for Israel His people.

## 1 Kings 9

### God's Second Appearance to Solomon

God comes again to Solomon and this time reiterates His promise in the Davidic Covenant. Verses 4-5 are probably the best summary of the books of **1 & 2 Kings**, maybe the whole Old Testament. They may be key to the entire Bible and our success in life. God desires that we give Him all of our heart, and walk in this life with integrity, righteousness, and holiness.

**1 And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished building the house of the LORD and the king's house, and all Solomon's desire which he wanted to do, 2 that the LORD appeared to Solomon the second time, as He had appeared to him at Gibeon. 3 And the LORD said to him: "I have heard your prayer and your supplication that you have made before Me; I have consecrated this house which you have built to put My name there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually. 4 Now if you walk before Me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgments, 5 then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, as I promised David your father, saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.' 6 But if you or your sons at all turn from following Me, and do not keep My commandments and My statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, 7 then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them; and this house which I have consecrated for My name I will cast out of My sight. Israel will be a proverb and a byword among all peoples. 8 And as for this house, which is exalted, everyone who passes by it will be astonished and will hiss, and say, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this land and to this house?' 9 Then they will answer, 'Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, and worshiped them and served them; therefore the LORD has brought all this calamity on them.'"**

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. God is faithful. He will always do what He said He will do.
2. God desires our worship. He is worthy and certainly deserves it.
3. It is all about Jesus and always will be. Every story in scripture ultimately points to Jesus.

### So what about the temple?

That is great, but why should we study the temple? You may say, "I just do not get into the temple stories. They are boring. These are the old ways. We do not do temple worship anymore." You may be missing the connection to yourself. Three thoughts stand out in my mind when I think of the temple.

1. The temple is a big Old Testament neon sign pointing to Christ.
  - The altar reminds us He is our sacrifice.
  - The basin of water reminds us that He has cleansed us. He has made us clean.
  - The table of showbread reminds us He is the Bread of Life.
  - The altar of incense reminds us He stands constantly before the Father making intercession for us.
  - The menorah reminds us He is the light of the world.



2. We are His temple today. How are we taking care of that temple where He currently resides?

3. There are two more times of temple worship yet on God's agenda. The next event on God's calendar is the rapture. This is the taking away of the believers "in Christ" by Jesus Himself. Following that is the tribulation; a seven-year period of judgment from God. During that time worship in a temple, by the Jews will be reestablished. Then the second coming of Christ to Earth will occur. In this case, those raptured (us) will return with Him to set up the Millennial Kingdom—a 1,000 year reign on Earth. During this time temple worship will be reinstituted and we will be directly or indirectly involved. "But if these are in the future, what does that have to do with me now?" The point is: They are close! The pictures I showed you at the beginning are actual temple artifacts prepared over the last thirty years specifically for use in the coming temple. Everything needed for this temple has been created and is awaiting its time of usefulness. The Sanhedrin has been chosen for rule. The High Priest has been chosen and his garments made. The animals for sacrifice have been raised and are waiting. The foundation stones for sure, probably all the building supplies have been cut and prepared. The beginning of the tribulation is marked by a peace treaty to "guarantee" Israel's safety. The neighboring nations that have been at peace with Israel have all been renouncing those treaties. Several neighbors are becoming more openly hostile towards Israel. Their desire for peace and looking for anyone to help is building rapidly. The religious in Israel are becoming more powerful and controlling of the laws and ways within the country. All of these things say the tribulation is getting much closer. **So how close is the rapture itself?**

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Know scripture and study. There are promises God has yet to fulfill. Do you know what those promises are for you either now or in the future? He will fulfill them!
2. Worship God. We are going to be doing this for all of eternity, but should not be waiting until then. Get excited about what God is doing. Be a part of it!
3. Let others in on it. Time is running out. We need to be about the business for which God called us. Let us get past our fears and let others know God loves them and sent His Son to die for them. What if someone had been too fearful to tell you?

# The Fall of Israel: Elijah and the Prophets of Baal

---

## Preview: What kind of God?

100 years after Solomon, idol worship is normal and supported by the monarchy in Israel. At this point, Israel has split into two kingdoms (today's text is in reference to the northern kingdom).

As always, God preserves men and women to serve as a remnant in His service. Elijah fills a part of that role in today's text and is encouraged through a variety of God's creative means.

Key thought: God's plan will be done and He will **encourage** those that do it

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): 1 Kings 16:29-19:18 (Author = Unknown)

### 1 Kings 16 (the setting)

#### Ahab Reigns in Israel (29-34)

**29 In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab the son of Omri became king over Israel** [~900 B.C.—about 100 years after Solomon]; **and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years** [he ruled from a pagan place]. **30 Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD, more than all who were before him. 31 And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial [light] thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel** [unchaste; **Coffman: The god of Jezebel was . . . Baal. . . . He was the kind of god who required the burning of innocent little children . . . upon his altar. . . . to induce him to send rain upon the earth, fertility cult practices were engaged in and sacrifices were offered.** The written Word of God solves the problem with offerings: namely, what is the standard?] **the daughter of Ethbaal** [a priest of Ashtaroht], **king of the Sidonians; and he [Ahab] went and served Baal and worshiped him. 32 Then he [Ahab] set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he [Ahab] had built in Samaria. [Coffman: During the reign of Ahab, the worship of Baal was officially installed as the national religion] 33 And Ahab made a wooden image. Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him. 34 In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho** [**Joshua 6:26** was written 800 years before]. **He laid its foundation with Abiram his firstborn, and with his youngest son Segub he set up its gates, according to the word of the LORD, which He had spoken through Joshua the son of Nun.**

### 1 Kings 17 (the servant)

#### Elijah Proclaims a Drought (1-7)

**1 And Elijah** [my God is Jehovah] **the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead** [notice that neither his father's name nor his mother's name is given—he just drops into the narrative much like Melchisidek did in **Genesis**], **said to Ahab, “As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word.”** [Since this was a farming community, this was very bad]

**2** Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, **3** “Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. **4** And it will be *that* you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.” [Never underestimate God’s creativity to **sustain**. What kind of God sustains a prophet with ravens? Jehovah does.]

**5** So he [Elijah] went and did according to the word of the LORD [sometimes we skip over these little statements of instant obedience—but that is the only real kind of obedience—**instant obedience**], **for he went and stayed by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan.** **6** The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook [the ravens brought him just enough and no more—Jehovah is an on **time** God (but He apparently does not care about lunch)]. **7** And it happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land. [Coffman: When a nation suffers, God’s people must also suffer. Elijah was NOT exempt from the effects of the terrible drought. Conclusion: Do not be discouraged when conditions are bad—God is still good.]

### Elijah and the Widow (8-16)

**8** Then the word of the LORD came to him [Elijah], saying, **9** “Arise, go to Zarephath, which *belongs* to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you.” [This should make you laugh because if there was anyone in that economy who needed someone to provide for them it was a widow. What kind of God provides for a prophet through the hand of a widow? Jehovah does. Never underestimate God’s creativity to sustain.] **10** So he arose and went to Zarephath [again—**instant obedience**]. And when he came to the gate of the city, indeed a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, “Please bring me a little water in a cup, that I may drink.” **11** And as she was going to get it, he called to her and said, “Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.”

**12** So she said, “As the LORD your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a jar [some of the ingredients necessary for making bread]; and see, I *am* gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die.” [<sarcasm>At least she was positive about it</sarcasm>]

**13** And Elijah said to her, “Do not fear; go *and* do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring it to me; and afterward make *some* for yourself and your son. **14** For thus says the LORD God of Israel: ‘The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the LORD sends rain on the earth.’” [How much would you pay for a gallon of milk that never ran dry? What kind of God gives these kinds of gifts away? Jehovah does.]

**15** So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for *many* days. **16** The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke by Elijah. [God will always do what God says He will do—every time.]

### Elijah Revives the Widow’s Son (17-24)

**17** Now it happened after these things [we are not sure exactly how much time passes] *that* the son of the woman who owned the house became sick. And his sickness was so serious that there was no breath left in him [i.e., he was either dead or very near death]. **18** So she said to Elijah, “What have I to

do with you, O man of God? Have you come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to kill my son?" [She believed in a quid pro quo God (i.e., do-good- get-good, do-bad-get-bad theological belief)]

**19** And he said to her, "Give me your son." So he took him out of her arms and carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed. **20** Then he cried out to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, have You also brought tragedy on the widow with whom I lodge, by killing her son?" **21** And he stretched himself out on the child three times, and cried out to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, I pray, let this child's soul come back to him." **22** Then the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived. [What kind of a God brings the dead back to life? Jehovah does (see [John 11:1-4](#) for the 'why'—the forcefulness of Elijah's prayers did not save this boy, but rather the supernatural power of a loving Father did).]

**23** And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house, and gave him to his mother. And Elijah said, "See, your son lives!"

**24** Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now by this I know that you *are* a man of God, *and* that the word of the LORD in your mouth *is* the truth." [Some people only believe after multiple miracles. How many miracles does God have to show you before you will believe His Word? Sometimes, God will use someone to bless you so you can be a **blessing** in return.]

## 1 Kings 18

### Elijah's Message to Ahab (1-19)

**1** And it came to pass *after* many days that the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, "Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the earth." [God is patient]

**2** So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab [again—instant obedience]; and *there was* a severe famine in Samaria. [Coffman: The Canaanite Baal, as the god of fertility, rain, good crops, etc., had really "flunked out" in the situation precipitated by that devastating drought. Summary of [1 Kings 18:3-16](#): Ahab is looking for a place to feed his animals and meets up with Elijah.] **3** And Ahab had called Obadiah [while there are many in the Old Testament who were named Obadiah, the timelines align perfectly for this to be the Obadiah who wrote [Obadiah](#)], who *was* in charge of *his* house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly. **4** For so it was, while Jezebel massacred the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah had taken one hundred prophets and hidden them, fifty to a cave, and had fed them with bread and water.) **5** And Ahab had said to Obadiah, "Go into the land to all the springs of water and to all the brooks; perhaps we may find grass to keep the horses and mules alive, so that we will not have to kill any livestock." **6** So they divided the land between them to explore it; Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself. [Obadiah is an example of a faithful servant in a bad situation]

**7** Now as Obadiah was on his way, suddenly Elijah met him; and he recognized him, and fell on his face, and said, "Is that you, my lord Elijah?"

**8** And he answered him, "It is I. Go, tell your master, 'Elijah is here.'"

**9** So he said, “How have I sinned, that you are delivering your servant into the hand of Ahab, to kill me? **10** As the LORD your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my master has not sent someone to hunt for you; and when they said, ‘*He is not here,*’ he took an oath from the kingdom or nation that they could not find you. **11** And now you say, ‘Go, tell your master, “*Elijah is here*”!’ **12** And it shall come to pass, *as soon as* I am gone from you, that the Spirit of the LORD will carry you to a place I do not know [Obadiah had a high view of God’s view of Elijah]; so when I go and tell Ahab, and he cannot find you, he will kill me. But I your servant have feared the LORD from my youth. **13** Was it not reported to my lord what I did when Jezebel killed the prophets of the LORD, how I hid one hundred men of the LORD’s prophets, fifty to a cave, and fed them with bread and water? **14** And now you say, ‘Go, tell your master, “*Elijah is here.*”’ He will kill me!”

**15** Then Elijah said, “As the LORD of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will surely present myself to him today.”

**16** So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him; and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

**17** Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him [Elijah], “*Is that you, O troubler* [disturber] *of Israel?*” [Ahab blamed Elijah for the drought/famine, when in reality Ahab was to blame]

**18** And he [Elijah] answered, “I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father’s house *have*, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and have followed the Baals. **19** Now therefore, send *and* gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Asherah [Baal’s woman], *who eat at Jezebel’s table.*” [Elijah asked for 850 to show up. Elijah is not **disrespectful** to the king, but rather plainly speaks the truth.]

### Elijah’s Mount Carmel Victory (20-40)

**20** So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel.

**21** And Elijah came to all the people, and said, “How long will you falter between two opinions? [He sounds like Moses and Joshua before him. There are only **two** choices in life: to follow God or not to follow God.] *If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.*” [God vs god] **But the people answered him not a word.** **22** Then Elijah said to the people, “I alone am left a prophet of the LORD [he is the only public prophet who is speaking for God, but not the only one left by a long shot]; **but Baal’s prophets are four hundred and fifty men** [apparently, Asherah’s prophets took the day off]. **23** Therefore let them give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay *it* on the wood, but put no fire *under it*; and I will prepare the other bull, and lay *it* on the wood, but put no fire *under it*. **24** Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD; and the God who answers by fire, He is God.”

So all the people answered and said, “It is well spoken.”

**25** Now Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, “Choose one bull for yourselves and prepare *it* first, for you *are many*; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire *under it*.”

**26** So they took the bull which was given them, and they prepared *it*, and called on the name of Baal from morning even till noon, saying, “O Baal, hear us!” But *there was* no voice; no one answered. Then they leaped about the altar which they had made.

**27** And so it was, at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, “Cry aloud, for he *is* a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, *or* perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened.” **28** So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them [Coffman: The superstition existed that the blood of priests was especially virtuous in constraining the deity to action]. **29** And when midday was past, they prophesied until the *time* of the offering of the *evening* sacrifice. But *there was* no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention.

**30** Then Elijah said to all the people, “Come near to me.” So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD *that was* broken down. **31** And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, “Israel shall be your name.” **32** Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD [just like Moses did in Exodus 24:4]; and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two seahs of seed [18.5 gallons]. **33** And he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces [his hands would have been bloody from this—reminding us that sin is messy], and laid *it* on the wood, and said, “Fill four waterpots with water, and pour *it* on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood.” **34** Then he said, “Do it a second time,” and they did *it* a second time; and he said, “Do it a third time,” and they did *it* a third time. **35** So the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water [at least 20 gallons of water].

**36** And it came to pass, at *the time of* the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, “LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You *are* God in Israel and I *am* Your servant, and *that* I have done all these things at Your word. **37** Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You *are* the LORD God, and *that* You have turned their hearts back to You again.” [God is the hero of Elijah’s prayer, not Elijah]

**38** Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that *was* in the trench. [What kind of God consumes stones and dust? Jehovah does.] **39** Now when all the people saw *it*, they fell on their faces; and they said, “The LORD, He *is* God! The LORD, He *is* God!”

**40** And Elijah said to them, “Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!” So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there. [That is what the Law commanded to be done to false prophets when they were exposed.]

### The Drought Ends (41-46)

[Summary of 1 Kings 18:41-46: It rains and Ahab goes home] **41** Then Elijah said to Ahab, “Go up, eat and drink; for *there is* the sound of abundance of rain.” **42** So Ahab went up to eat and drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; then he bowed down on the ground, and put his face between his knees, **43** and said to his servant, “Go up now, look toward the sea.”

So he went up and looked, and said, “*There is nothing.*” And seven times he said, “Go again.”

**44** Then it came to pass the seventh *time*, that he said, “There is a cloud, as small as a man’s hand, rising out of the sea!” So he said, “Go up, say to Ahab, ‘Prepare *your chariot*, and go down before the rain stops you.’”

**45** Now it happened in the meantime that the sky became black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy rain. [John Wesley: Great blessings often rise from small beginnings, and showers of plenty from a cloud of a span long. Let us therefore never *despise the day of small things*, but hope and wait for greater things from it.] So Ahab rode away and went to Jezreel. **46** Then the hand of the LORD came upon Elijah; and he girded up his loins and ran ahead of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel [at least 10 miles].

## 1 Kings 19

### Elijah Escapes from Jezebel (1-10)

**1** And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword. [Ahab went and told on Elijah to Jezebel instead of telling Jezebel that they would now serve Jehovah.] **2** Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, “So let the gods do *to me*, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time.” **3** And when he [Elijah] saw *that*, he arose and ran for his life, and went to Beersheba, which *belongs* to Judah, and left his servant there.

**4** But he [Elijah] himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, “It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I *am* no better than my fathers!” [Which other Bible prophet does this sound like? **Jonah**]

**5** Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an angel touched him, and said to him, “Arise *and eat.*” [At this point in the narrative, Elijah has been encouraged by a ravens, a widow, and now an angel. Never underestimate God’s creativity to sustain.] **6** Then he looked, and there by his head *was* a cake baked on coals, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again. **7** And the angel of the LORD came back the second time [What kind of God comes back for us a second time? Jehovah does (because sometimes we need more than one encouragement)], and touched him [because sometimes we need to be touched], and said, “Arise *and eat*, because the journey *is* too great for you.” [This is a strange statement because the journey was only **100** miles away—at most a week’s journey.] **8** So he arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God. [It took him 40 days and God knew it would take him 40 days. God knows when we will go through the wilderness for long periods, He is with us there, and He will prepare us for those times. What kind of God prepares us for the wilderness? Jehovah does.]

**9** And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and He said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”



**10 So he [Elijah] said, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.”**

### God's Revelation to Elijah (11-18)

**11 Then He said, “Go out, and stand on the mountain before the LORD.” And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, *but* the LORD *was* not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, *but* the LORD *was* not in the earthquake; 12 and after the earthquake a fire, *but* the LORD *was* not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.** [What kind of God brings strong winds, breaks rocks, makes an earthquake, creates a fire, and speaks in a still small voice to let us know we are not alone? Jehovah does.]

**13 So it was, when Elijah heard *it*, that he wrapped his face in his mantle** [Treasury of Scripture Knowledge: This he did to signify his reverence; for covering the face was a token of respect] **and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice *came* to him, and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”** [Does this repetition of questions remind you of anyone? Jesus. God will challenge our motives when they are not in line with His wise and holy will.]

**14 And he said** [the same as the first time], **“I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.”** [Elijah pours out his pity-party heart to God . . . again]

**15 Then the LORD said to him: “Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, anoint Hazael *as* king over Syria. 16 Also you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi *as* king over Israel** [one of the jobs of the prophets was to anoint kings]. **And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint *as* prophet in your place** [Coffman: God teaches here that there is no such thing as a NECESSARY man; man, even at his best estate, is altogether vanity; but God is all in all. God buries His workmen, but His work goes on.]. **17 It shall be *that* whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill. 18 Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.”** [What kind of God keeps 7,000 faithful servants in reserve? Jehovah does.]

Challenge: Never forget what kind of God we serve

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. Instant obedience is kind of obedience God desires
2. God will accomplish His will in creative ways
3. God will sometimes be very patient with His servants

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Obey immediately
2. Remember the kind of God we serve
3. **Esther Archer: Listen for the voice of God and be willing to act when He does speak**

# The Fall of Israel: The Fall of Jerusalem

---

## Preview: This Changes Everything

Have you ever been reading a book and you got to a pivotal plot change that the author only spent a short amount of time on? **2 Kings 25** is that chapter in the Bible. When first read, you might wonder why it is listed in the 100 most essential passages for a Christian to be familiar with, but once you understand that it affects all of the remainder of the Old Testament, its inclusion makes more sense.

Reading the Bible is like that sometimes. **Important** things are easy to overlook and we can easily become complacent with the fact that we are going through the motions. For example, Bible reading and prayer do not exist for themselves. They exist for us to gain a deeper relationship with God. The same was true for the Old Testament laws that God instituted. God set them up as vehicles for relationship with Him, but Israel had neglected them as a nation—they were up, then they were down, then they were up, then they were down. At times they were apostate, at times they were serious about God, at times they skipped over important things—and in **2 Kings 25**, God deals with all of it.

Like a parent that has finally had enough of a disobedient child, God takes Israel to the woodshed—and it is not pretty. Sin is always messy, God is patient, and we will always reap what we sow.

Key thought: Always be **alert** to the important things (in Bible study and in life)

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): 2 Kings 25 (Author = Unknown)

### The Fall and Captivity of Judah

**1 Now it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month** [about **590** B.C.—four hundred years after Solomon set up the high places], **that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came against Jerusalem and encamped against it; and they built a siege wall** [lines of circumvallation] **against it all around** [Step 1: isolate the city]. **2 So the city was besieged until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. 3 By the ninth day of the fourth month** [18 months into the siege] **the famine had become so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land.**

**4 Then the city wall was broken through, and all the men of war fled at night by way of the gate between two walls, which was by the king's garden, even though the Chaldeans were still encamped all around against the city. And the king went by way of the plain. 5 But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king, and they overtook him in the plains of Jericho. All his army was scattered from him. 6 So they** [the Chaldeans] **took the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon** [Nebuchadnezzar] **at Riblah, and they pronounced judgment on him. 7 Then they killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, put out the eyes of Zedekiah** [Step 2: deal with the royal family (the last thing king Zedekiah saw was the **murder** of his children—in Eastern cultures at that time, the blind were not considered worthy to be kings, so this would disqualify him from serving as a king in any other country under the control of Nebuchadnezzar)], **bound him with bronze fetters, and took him to Babylon.**

**8 And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month (which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. 9 He burned the house of the LORD and the king's house** [Step 3: destroy the infrastructure. Nebuzaradan is the Old Testament equivalent of **Sherman** burning Atlanta. The house of the Lord took 20 years to build. Solomon's house took 13 years to build. They took one day to burn. **Adam Clarke: four hundred and twenty-four years three months and eight days from the time in which Solomon laid its foundation stone.** Priceless treasures can be lost in **one** day. **John Wesley: By the burning of the temple God would shew, how little he cares for the outward pomp of his worship, when the life and power of religion are gone. About four hundred and thirty years the temple of Solomon had stood. And it is observed by Josephus, that the second temple was burnt by the Romans, the same month, and the same day of the month, that the first temple was burnt by the Chaldeans.]; **all the houses of Jerusalem, that is, all the houses of the great, he burned with fire. 10 And all the army of the Chaldeans who were with the captain of the guard broke down the walls of Jerusalem all around.** [The breaking down of the wall effectively destroyed Jerusalem's ability to **defend** herself in the future—unless the wall was rebuilt.]**

**11 Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive the rest of the people who remained in the city and the defectors who had deserted to the king of Babylon, with the rest of the multitude** [Step 4: gather slaves. God's people are once again slaves. Disobedience always leads to **slavery** (slavery to sin, slavery to self, and/or slavery to Satan).]. **12 But the captain of the guard left some of the poor of the land as vinedressers and farmers** [Even at this horrible time, there is hope in a remnant that remain. Moral: God always has a remnant. God's story is never without hope and never **ends**.]. **13 The bronze pillars that were in the house of the LORD, and the carts and the bronze Sea that were in the house of the LORD, the Chaldeans broke in pieces, and carried their bronze to Babylon. 14 They also took away the pots, the shovels, the trimmers, the spoons, and all the bronze utensils with which the priests ministered. 15 The firepans and the basins, the things of solid gold and solid silver, the captain of the guard took away. 16 The two pillars, one Sea, and the carts, which Solomon had made for the house of the LORD, the bronze of all these articles was beyond measure. 17 The height of one pillar was eighteen cubits, and the capital on it was of bronze. The height of the capital was three cubits, and the network and pomegranates all around the capital were all of bronze. The second pillar was the same, with a network.** [Step 5: pillage. The countless and priceless treasures that Solomon had constructed were now used in a pagan king's court. When you devalue God's Word, you treat sin lightly. When you treat sin lightly, you have an inconsistent walk. When you have an inconsistent walk, God deals with you. When God deals with you, your enemies may win for a while. When your enemies win for a while, the church is burned to the ground. Don't let the **church** be burned to the ground—value God's Word.]

**18 And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, Zephaniah the second priest, and the three doorkeepers. 19 He also took out of the city an officer who had charge of the men of war, five men of the king's close associates who were found in the city, the chief recruiting officer of the army, who mustered the people of the land, and sixty men of the people of the land who were found in the city. 20 So Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, took these and brought them to the king of Babylon at**

**Riblah. 21 Then the king of Babylon struck them and put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath.** [Step 6: kill the rest of the leadership] **Thus Judah was carried away captive from its own land.** [This was 860 years since Joshua walked them into this land.]

### Gedaliah Made Governor of Judah

**22 Then he** [Nebuchadnezzar] **made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, governor over the people who remained in the land of Judah** [Step 7: Set up new leaders. **John Wesley (on Gedaliah): A righteous and good man, and a friend to the prophet Jeremiah**], **whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left. 23 Now when all the captains of the armies, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor, they came to Gedaliah at Mizpah—Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, Johanan the son of Careah, Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah the son of a Maachathite, they and their men. 24 And Gedaliah took an oath before them and their men, and said to them, “Do not be afraid of the servants of the Chaldeans. Dwell in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you.”** [Gedaliah had not given up hope]

**25 But it happened in the seventh month that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the royal family, came with ten men and struck and killed Gedaliah** [some would rather be **slaves** than **free**], **the Jews, as well as the Chaldeans who were with him at Mizpah. 26 And all the people, small and great, and the captains of the armies, arose and went to Egypt; for they were afraid of the Chaldeans.**

### Jehoiachin Released from Prison

**27 Now it came to pass in the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, that Evil-Merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, released Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison. 28 He spoke kindly to him, and gave him a more prominent seat than those of the kings who were with him in Babylon. 29 So Jehoiachin changed from his prison garments, and he ate bread regularly before the king all the days of his life. 30 And as for his provisions, there was a regular ration given him by the king, a portion for each day, all the days of his life.** [Thus ends of the book of **Kings** (one book in the original Hebrew, but split into two books for us in English)]

Challenge: Stay alert

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. Important things are often easily overlooked (this chapter affects every chapter of the Old Testament after it chronologically)
2. Even when punishing His people, God always has a remnant
3. God's story is **never** over—there is always hope

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Get the big **rocks** in the jar (prayer, Bible study, fellowship, etc.)
2. Remain faithful (be an 'other')
3. Know that no matter how dark the night, the **Son** is coming again. This is not the end of your story. If God is your daddy, then I do not want to spoil the ending for you, but everything is going to be OK.

# The Essential 100

## A Bible overview plan for 2011-2012

The Essential 100 (E100) is a systematic approach that guides readers through the big picture of the Bible. It is a carefully selected list of short Bible passages—50 from the Old Testament and 50 from the New Testament. Each testament is broken up into ten, five-week series. We will move from Old to New Testaments every five weeks. My goal is to teach three of the five lessons in every series.

The E100 in Sunday school: We will REAP (read, explain, apply, and personalize) one passage each week and finish a series every five weeks. Each lesson will include a key verse for memorization. At the end of two years, we will have covered the essential 100 passages in the Bible.

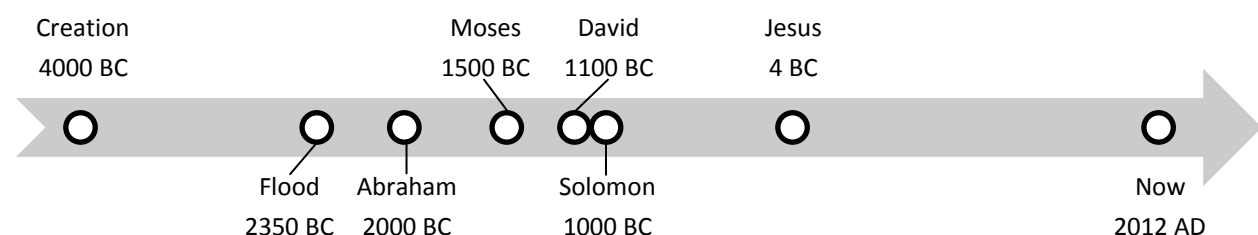
Additional information: To learn more about The E100 program and to obtain additional resources, visit [e100challenge.com](http://e100challenge.com). Our Sunday school website is [stuartheights.org/sundayschool](http://stuartheights.org/sundayschool).

## The Schedule: Psalms and Proverbs

This is our ninth five-week series in the Old Testament. So far, we have looked at In the Beginning, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, The Story of Joseph, Moses and the Exodus, The Law and the Land, and The Judges, The Rise of Israel, and The Fall of Israel. Now, we shift to Psalms and Proverbs.

Date	Lesson	Key Verse(s)	Passage	Speaker
August 5	The Lord is My Shepherd	Psalms 23:1	Psalms 23	Jim Fleming
August 12	Have Mercy on Me	Psalms 51:10-11	Psalms 51	Doug Skinner
August 19	Praise the Lord	Psalms 103:1	Psalms 103	Chandalee Chrisman
August 26	Godly Wisdom	Proverbs 3:5-6	Proverbs 1-4	Terry Brown
September 2	Proverbs of Solomon	Proverbs 16:8	Proverbs 16-18	Jim Fleming

Assuming a literal interpretation of Bible dates, the following timeline is close:



Initially, the patriarchs received revelation from God passed it on orally to those around them. Later, the Law was given and Moses and Joshua administered it. Judges then filled the leadership needs for Israel. Prophets intermittently helped and Israel rose to power and fell under kings like Saul, David, and Solomon. Throughout the kings, Hebrew poetry emerged as a communication vehicle for truth.

# Psalms and Proverbs: The Lord is My Shepherd

---

## Introduction to Hebrew Poetry

**Job**, **Psalms**, **Proverbs**, **Ecclesiastes**, and the **Song of Solomon** are referred to as the Wisdom or Poetical books. These books are written with a poetical structure. **Job** is a conversation between Job and three of his friends. **Psalms** is a collection of poems written by a variety of authors showcasing the Old Testament songbook. **Proverbs** and **Ecclesiastes** are brilliant exposes on relationships, life, and how not to live. The **Song of Solomon** finishes the section by giving us a deep drink of romance.

## Types of Hebrew Poetry

The common theme around Hebrew poetry is parallelism—the relationship between the **meaning** of two lines of poetry. Parallelism is the idea that words rhyme if their meanings are similar. English rhyme is based on sounds (phonics). Hebrew rhyme is based on meanings (semantics).

There are many variations of Hebrew parallelism, but the main types are:

1. Synonymous parallelism: repeating the same thought where slight differences in each line expand or narrow the theme brought forward in the first line. Recognizing synonymous parallelism is a great tool in interpreting the Bible as the Bible is literally commenting on itself.

Example: **Proverbs 1:31: Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way,  
And be filled to the full with their own fancies.**

2. Antithetical parallelism: repeating the opposite thought

Example: **Proverbs 15:1: A soft answer turns away wrath,  
But a harsh word stirs up anger.**

3. Formal parallelism: balancing thoughts but neither synonymous or antithetical

Example: **Psalms 14:2: The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men,  
To see if there are any who understand, who seek God.**

4. Climactic parallelism: partial balance, but the second line adds a thought or completes it

Example: **Psalms 29:1: Give unto the LORD, O you mighty ones,  
Give unto the LORD glory and strength.**

You may or may not know this, but many scholars feel that about one-third of the Old Testament is poetry. You might be thinking, “I did not know there was that much!” Part of the reason we do not think some books are poetic is because of the way that we divide books—we call some books historical, some books prophetic, and some books poetical.

**Job**, **Psalms**, **Proverbs**, **Ecclesiastes**, and the **Song of Solomon** are labeled the poetical books. The problem with that is that it implies that the other books are not poetical. That is not true. Poetry is

found in [Genesis](#), [Exodus](#), [Leviticus](#), [Numbers](#), [Deuteronomy](#), [Joshua](#), [Judges](#), [Ruth](#), [1 Samuel](#), [2 Samuel](#), [1 Kings](#), [2 Kings](#), [1 Chronicles](#), [2 Chronicles](#), [Ezra](#), [Isaiah](#), [Jeremiah](#), all of [Lamentations](#), [Ezekiel](#), [Daniel](#), [Hosea](#), [Joel](#), [Amos](#), [Obadiah](#), [Jonah](#), virtually all of [Micah](#), virtually all of [Nahum](#), virtually all of [Habakkuk](#), virtually all of [Zephaniah](#), [Zechariah](#), and virtually all of [Malachi](#). The trick is identifying what is and what is not poetry. In Hebrew, it is not as clear as, “There once was a man from Nantucket.”

**Why would God choose to record so much of His Word in poetic form?** Well, it is (1) **emotional** (we can relate to it), it is (2) beautiful (we can appreciate it), it is (3) **easy** to remember (we can retain it), and it is (4) easy to translate (we can share it). Poetry in other languages rarely can be translated without losing its distinctiveness. Hebrew poetry can translated into other languages very easily since it communicates parallelism of meaning, not sound. Translate Shakespeare into French and it does not work well. Translate [Psalm 23](#) and it works perfectly. It was a brilliant choice of God to use poetry.

### Examples of poetry in the Old Testament outside the ‘Poetical Books’

#### 1. Creation

**Genesis 1:1: In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.** God created the universe on the first day. Universe is a compound word combining the words, ‘uni’ (meaning single or one) and, ‘verse’ (meaning a spoken sentence of poetry). Therefore, a practical definition of the universe is what God created in a single spoken sentence of poetry.

#### 2. Adam’s first recorded words were poetry ([Genesis 2:23](#))

**And Adam said:**

**“This is now bone of my bones**

**And flesh of my flesh;**

**She shall be called Woman,**

**Because she was taken out of Man.”**

#### 3. The Flood (an example of a chiasmus—inverted parallelism)

A Noah ([6:10a](#))

\_B Shem, Ham, and Japheth ([6:10b](#))

\_C Ark to be built ([6:14-16](#))

\_D Flood announced ([6:17](#))

\_E Covenant with Noah ([6:18-20](#))

\_F Food in the ark ([6:21](#))

\_G Command to enter the ark ([7:1-3](#))

\_H 7 days waiting for flood ([7:4-5](#))

\_I 7 days waiting for flood ([7:7-10](#))

\_J Entry to ark ([7:11-15](#))

\_K YHWH shuts Noah in ([7:16](#))

\_L 40 days flood ([7:17a](#))

\_M Waters increase ([7:17b-18](#))

\_N Mountains covered ([7:19-20](#))

\_O 150 days water prevail ([7:21-24](#))

\_P God remembers Noah ([8:1](#))

\_O’ 150 days waters abate ([8:3](#))

\_N’ Mountain tops visible ([8:4-5](#))

\_M’ Waters abate ([8:5](#))

\_L’ 40 days (end of) ([8:6a](#))

\_K’ Noah opens window of ark ([8:6b](#))

\_J’ Raven and dove leave ark ([8:7-9](#))

\_I’ 7 days waiting for waters to subside ([8:10-11](#))

\_H’ 7 days waiting for waters to subside ([8:12-13](#))

\_G’ Command to leave ark ([8:15-17, 22](#))

\_F’ Food outside ark ([9:1-4](#))

\_E’ Covenant with all flesh ([9:8-10](#))

\_D’ No flood in the future ([9:11-17](#))

\_C’ Ark ([9:18a](#))

\_B’ Shem, Ham and Japheth ([9:18b](#))

A’ Noah ([9:19](#))



## Preview: The Chapter Three-Year-Olds Can Quote

**Psalms** is the longest book in the Bible. There are 150 psalms. David wrote **73**, the family of Asaph wrote 12, the sons of Korah wrote 11, Solomon wrote two, Heman wrote one, Ethan wrote one, and Moses wrote one. They were written between 1400 BC (when Moses wrote **Psalm 90**) and ~600-530 BC (when **Psalm 137** was written). In this **Psalm 23**, David compares the Lord to a shepherd.

**C. H. Spurgeon's Treasury of David:** The position of this psalm is worthy of notice. It follows the twenty-second, which is peculiarly the Psalm of the Cross. There are no green pastures, no still waters on the other side of the twenty-second psalm. It is only after we have read, "**My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?**" that we come to "**The LORD is my Shepherd.**" We must by experience know the value of blood shedding . . . before we shall be able truly to know the Sweetness of the good Shepherd's care.

**Psalm 23** is probably the most well known psalm (and perhaps even the most well known chapter in the entire Bible). It communicates clear truths in an extremely poetic, clear, and powerful ways.

Key thought: The Good Shepherd (**Jesus**) takes care of us

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Psalm 23 (Author = David)

### The LORD the Shepherd of His People. A Psalm of David.

**1 The LORD is my shepherd;** [and there could be none better to shepherd us—and instantly we see how Jesus fulfills this as the Good Shepherd: **John 10:14: I am the Good Shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.**]

**I shall not want** [lack, be in need—because the Creator of all things has declared it to be so. If we could ever wrap our heads around this concept of not wanting, our lives would be much better off.].

**2 He makes [causes] me to lie down** [stretch out] **in green pastures** [pastures that He created; **Coffman:** Any person who knows anything about sheep knows that they will never lie down when they are hungry. Therefore, the scene here is the green pastures where the sheep have eaten their fill and then when no longer hungry they lie down.];

**He leads** [leads, guides] **me beside the still waters** [still waters that He created].

**3 He restores** [brings back, restores, refreshes, **repairs**, shows me the way for] **my soul;**  
**He leads me in the paths** [entrenchment, track, circumvallation—military imagery] **of righteousness** [justice, righteousness]

**For His name's** [reputation, fame, glory, memorial] **sake.** [**Adam Clarke:** God's motives of conduct towards the children of men are derived from the perfections and goodness of his own nature]

**4 Yea, though I walk through the valley** [valley, a steep valley, narrow gorge] **of the shadow of death** [death-shadow, deep shadow, deep darkness, shadow of death, extreme danger, place of the **dead**;  
**Adam Clarke:** He knows all the *passes, dangerous defiles, hidden pits, and abrupt precipices in the way; and he will guide me around, about, and through them*],

**I will fear no evil** [bad, evil, unpleasant evil, pain, unhappiness, misery, vicious disposition, ethically wicked person, thought, or deed; distress, injury, **calamity**, adversity, wrong];

**For You are with me** [David shifts from talking *about* God to talking *to* God];

**Your rod** [rod, staff, branch, offshoot, **club** (ouch), scepter (used of royalty), tribe (family)] **and Your staff** [**support** (of every kind), staff ], **they comfort** [comfort, console] **me**. [Coffman: The rod was a short oaken club for defense; the staff was a longer pole used for climbing or leaning upon it. Eastern shepherds still carry both. Beigent added that the rod was often tipped with iron.]

**5 You prepare** [to arrange, set or put or lay in order, set in array, prepare, order, ordain, handle, **furnish**] **a table before me** [before my face, in front of my face] **in the presence of my enemies** [to bind, be narrow, be in distress, make narrow, cause distress, besiege, be straitened, be bound , tie up, shut up, be cramped, be in straits];

**You anoint** [to make fat, anoint] **my head with oil** [a drug or unguent (Wikipedia: a soothing preparation spread on wounds, burns, rashes, abrasions . . . (i.e. damage to the skin) . . . It was also used by the Egyptians to help soothe their skin from the dry heat) used for anointing];

**My cup runs over** [is **saturated**].

**6 Surely goodness** [goodness, pleasantness, agreeableness, excellence, valuable, appropriateness, gladness, prosperity, good understanding, kindness, benefit, happiness, moral good] **and mercy** [Hebrew, **chesed**; goodness, kindness, faithfulness] **shall follow me** [to be behind, follow after, pursue, persecute, run after, put to flight, chase, dog, attend closely upon, **harass**, aim to secure]

**All the days of my life;**

**And I will dwell** [to dwell, remain, abide, sit down, to stay, have one's abode] **in the house of the LORD Forever**. [Geneva Study Bible: He does not set his happiness in the pleasures of this world, but in the fear and service of God]

Challenge: You have nothing to fear when you are close to the Good Shepherd

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. The Scripture we learned as children still applies
2. Jesus will make it (our restoration, protection, comfort, and harassment) happen
3. It gets better—but only with **Jesus**

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Keep **memorizing**
2. Let Jesus do His work
3. Never quit on Jesus

# Psalms and Proverbs: Have Mercy on Me

---

## Preview: Psalm 51

### Main characters:

God	Bathsheba	Nathan
David	Uriah	Us

### Background

1. David the boy
  - a. David was a shepherd boy (usually in remote areas). It is in the quiet of the wilderness that God teaches David and it is here that David establishes a deep relationship with his heavenly Father. David kills a lion and bear. This is what we would expect a shepherd to do. Just as Jesus says in [John 10:11a](#): **I am the good shepherd.**
  - b. In [1 Samuel 17:29](#), we see David as a fearless warrior who stands up against insurmountable odds. He proves his commitment to the God of Israel by defeating Goliath ([1 Samuel 17](#)).
2. David the man
  - a. God appoints David king of Israel during Saul's reign. God develops David into great king.
  - b. David is a man of action always conquering what seems to be the next great obstacle. How, after coming through so much, does David make not only one wrong decision—he then tries to cover it with a murder.

Key thought: There is no valley too deep or too wide that God's sovereign love cannot gap

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Psalm 51 (Author = David)

**A Prayer of Repentance. To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.**

**1 Have mercy upon me, O God,**

**According to Your lovingkindness;**

**According to the multitude of Your tender mercies,**

**Blot out my transgressions.**

**2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,**

**And cleanse me from my sin.** [Interestingly, we see David neither running from God nor making excuses why he sinned. David falls before the mercy seat and begs for mercy—he does not fall on any previous merits. David's faith is in God's love. [Ephesians 2:4](#): **But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us. Titus 3:5a: Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us. 2 Timothy 1:12: For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.]**

**3 For I acknowledge my transgressions,**

**And my sin is always before me.** [Through Nathan, the Holy Spirit painted a vivid word picture for David. The story personalized and brought home to David the reality of the situation—that David had not rebelled against man, but against the very One who loved him the most.]

**4 Against You, You only, have I sinned,**

**And done *this* evil in Your sight—**

**That You may be found just when You speak,**

**And blameless when You judge.** [Why does David say, “Against You, You only, have I sinned”? What happened with Bathsheba, and Uriah were wrong. These were acts of unrighteousness. It was the rebellion from the inner heart. David went against very one He loved the most. God is interested what happens inside as well as the outside. From here, David submits to the **sovereign** judgment to be pronounced—no matter the severity (**Revelation 19:2: For true and righteous are His judgments; Psalm 119:142: Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, And Your law is truth**).]

**5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,**

**And in sin my mother conceived me.** [How do we possess wisdom? By reading God’s word. **Psalm 1:2: But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.** We need to stop listening to all the voices around us and find a quiet place without distractions. Illustration: the boys always with something in their ears]

**6 Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts,**

**And in the hidden *part* You will make me to know wisdom.**

**7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;**

**Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.**

**8 Make me hear joy [fellowship with God] and gladness,**

**That the bones You have broken may rejoice.**

**9 Hide Your face from my sins,**

**And blot out all my iniquities.** [Here we see a man who is broken and falls to the mercy of his God.

**Hebrews: 9:14: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?** God through His great love restores us in right fellowship and the Spirit of God breathes new life into our hearts and minds.]

### Personal testimony

**10 Create in me a clean heart, O God,**

**And renew a steadfast spirit within me.** [Only God can create life. Jesus said in **John 14:6b: I am the way, the truth, and the life.** We often find ourselves drawing on our own power and strength to do what only God can do.]

**11 Do not cast me away from Your presence,**

**And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.**

**12** Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,  
And uphold me *by Your generous Spirit*. [Romans 12:2: And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.]

**13** *Then* I will teach transgressors Your ways,  
And sinners shall be converted to You.

**14** Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God,  
The God of my salvation,  
And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness.

**15** O Lord, open my lips,  
And my mouth shall show forth Your praise.

**16** For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give *it*;  
You do not delight in burnt offering. [Jamieson, Fausset, Brown: Praise is better than sacrifice (Psalm 50:14), and implying faith, penitence, and love, glorifies God. In true penitents the joys of pardon mingle with sorrow for sin.]

**17** The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit,  
A broken and a contrite heart—  
These, O God, You will not despise.

**18** Do good in Your good pleasure to Zion;  
Build the walls of Jerusalem.

**19** Then You shall be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness,  
With burnt offering and whole burnt offering;  
Then they shall offer bulls on Your altar.

Challenge: What is your greatest priority?

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. God desires a **humble** spirit
2. There is hope at the cross
3. There is light at the end of the road

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Put God first
2. Peace comes through **consistent** communion with Jesus
3. Do not run from God's stern love

# Psalms and Proverbs: Praise the Lord

---

## Background

This Psalm was written as a corporate worship song for the temple. In OT, corporate worship served to keep the focus on God instead of making their prayers about their own needs and desires. **How often do we begin to pray only to find ourselves distracted by a grocery list or chores that need done or errands that need run?** By praying in corporate worship (or praying back Scripture in private), we are focusing solely on God and his Sovereignty.

By praying Scripture back to God, we are trying to comprehend how we can possibly fit in God's sacred history from creation to resurrection to eternity in Heaven praising our Savior. It takes the focus of us and puts it squarely on God and praising Him.

Take 30 seconds to count, specifically, the ways you complained in the last 24 hours (your hair, your clothes, your body shape, your spouse, your children, your house, your car, your job, other people, boss, your food, your pets, traffic, etc.). Now, share in the next 30 seconds at your tables the number of times you complained. It was eye opening for me to count the specific things that I complained about in a specific time.

## Preview: Why do we complain?

**Ron R. Ritchie: We complain because we experience grief, pain or discontent over people, places and things; we complain because we do not believe God is really in charge and he is working out his plan of redemption among us.**

Story of the Bradford pear tree and "blessings" when all I wanted to see was the problems with life.

For those who live in the South, one look at the pictures here and you know it is a Bradford Pear Tree. Beautiful blossoms abound but for a short time. Then they cover the ground and anything unfortunate enough to be around when they fall.

Several years ago, I lived in a house that had a big, old, beautiful Bradford in the front yard. Its wide branches covered most of our small yard. One spring, in the balmy breeze, with the sun shining on my upturned face, I sat absorbed in the day and in my then four-year-old daughter playing under that old Bradford pear tree.

I was finishing reading through a lesson for a bible study that I was co-leading. As I watched, my daughter run and play, carefree through the falling blossoms, my heart ached and leapt at the same time. I was alone. I was a single mom with a 4 1/2-year-old and a 2-year-old. I was contemplating on the hard times that had been and the hard times that I knew would be coming.

As she ran circles around the tree, my daughter held her arms up high. From her vantage point, I am sure she felt like she was stretching into the heavens, embracing the Father and all the beautiful

blossoms around her. She squealed with delight that warmed my spirit. Delight in the simple things, as if regardless of the harshness that had surrounded her young life.

She stretched, she reached, and she ran in circles, big ones, little ones, backward and forward. In her realization that I was staring at her, she stopped with arms still extended above her head and on her tippy-toes. She cried out, "It's snowing! It's snowing!" Granted the blossoms do tend to look like snow falling when a good strong breeze hits the branches and they let loose of the precious blossoms. She came running over and said again, "It's snowing, but I can't catch the snow!" As I looked her over, I pointed out, "You have caught them or rather, they have caught you! You are covered head to toe in snow."

At that moment, God spoke in that still small voice and in my spirit, I heard Him say, "My child, you have been like your daughter, running in circles, big ones, little ones, backward and forward, only seeing the bad, and not remembering the good. I have been here all along and I have caught you with all my blessings!"

**Ron R. Ritchie: We have a tendency to forget the good things and remember the bad.**

Let us open up **Psalm 103**, David is directing us back to focusing on those blessings.

Key thought: Accept blessing and bless God back

## **Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Psalm 103 (Author = David)**

**Praise for the LORD's Mercies. A Psalm of David.**

**1 Bless the LORD, O my soul;**

**And all that is within me, bless His holy name!** [It is what we call an envelope psalm—it ends in exactly the same way as it begins—the subject matter being thus enclosed or enveloped between the opening and closing words: "**Bless the LORD, O my soul**"]

**2 Bless the LORD, O my soul,**

**And forget not all His benefits:**

Each of my different titles tells different things I do. I am a Women's Ministry Leader and SALT Group Coordinator, and I have been a singer, the leader of various organizations, and a single mom. I am a wife, mother, daughter, sister, and granddaughter. My close friends and family call me Chandi or Sis. Each of my names or titles describes parts of who I am. None can accurately describe me or fulfill me because it is just a part and not the whole of who I am.

**Dr. Jerry Falwell's sermon, *How to Bless the Lord*: There are many names of God. Dr. Towns has taught 3 series in my Bible class and published 3 books on this topic:**

- 1. *The Names of Jesus*, he listed over 700 names and titles of Jesus.**
- 2. *My Father's Names*, he listed over 125 names and titles of the first person of the Trinity.**
- 3. *The Names of the Holy Spirit* he listed over 125 names and titles to the third person of the Trinity.**



The many names of the Trinity show us some of how God blesses us.

## I. Benefits of God

**3 Who forgives all your iniquities,  
Who heals all your diseases,**

### 1. Forgiveness

**John Philips: The word “iniquities” is a strong one. It does not mean “mistakes.”** One definition of iniquities is lack of righteousness, wickedness. One definition of sin is the actual offense of violating a religious or moral law.

**John Philips: God forgives our iniquities, all our ingrained perversity, all the bentness of our being. Now, there is an item for praise!**

In a well-known poem entitled *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, Coleridge depicts the plight of some ancient voyagers whose ship has drifted off course. A beautiful seabird, the albatross, accompanies the ship and brings favorable winds—a good omen. However, when one of the sailors shoots the bird with a crossbow, the winds die along with the albatross. The dead bird is hung around the neck of the guilty sailor as a constant reminder of his foolish error. Israel, too, could have hung a dead albatross around her neck as a reminder of her frequent (and tragic) mistakes.

**What albatross do you have around your neck?**

**What sin from the past sneaks up to haunt you?**

**What character flaw do you hold onto, thinking that God surely cannot forgive (or heal) in you?**

**Or that you carry around as a reminder to yourself what you have done?**

Turn to **Psalm 106:8, 43-44**, underline the word nevertheless, and complete this statement:

**8 Nevertheless He saved them for His name’s sake** [to prove the righteousness of the divine character],

**That He might make His mighty power known.**

**43 Many times He [God] delivered them;**

**But they rebelled in their counsel,**

**And were brought low for their iniquity.**

**44 Nevertheless He regarded their affliction,**

**When He heard their cry;**

Even though I have \_\_\_\_\_, nevertheless God has forgiven me. Fill in the blank with a sin from the past, and realize you are forgiven!

## 2. Healing

**Spiritual healing:** Spiritual healing occurs immediately upon our acceptance of Christ's gift of salvation to us. David is speaking to his soul here. Spiritual healing is the main emphasis of this verse however, physical healing can occur too.

*From Everett McCoy's sermon, **What God Wants You To Say When You Talk To Yourself:***

**In 1999 Dr Paul Brand and Philip Yancey co-wrote a book called, "Pain: the Gift Nobody Wants." Dr Brand was born in India to missionary parents, and has spent most of his life caring for people with leprosy.**

**One of Dr Brand's greatest discoveries was that people with leprosy do not have "bad flesh" that just rots away. Actually, their flesh is as healthy as yours, or mine. The problem is that blood flow is restricted to certain parts of their body, and their nerve endings die. With this death of their nerve endings comes the inability to sense danger to their bodies. Lepers live pain free.**

**Don't you wish you could live pain free? Not when you realize that this absence of pain is the greatest enemy of the leper. Again and again they harm their bodies, without even knowing it. They feel no pain.**

**Dr Brand knew that lepers often went blind. Why? Because they didn't blink. They didn't blink because they didn't feel the pain that we feel when our eyes dry out. Dr Brand solved this problem by surgically attaching the chewing muscle to their eyelid—and then teaching them to chew gum.**

**Dr Brand was puzzled by the fact that lepers often lost fingers and toes overnight. He knew that they weren't simply disappearing into thin air, so he commissioned workers to observe the lepers sleeping. To the surprise of the workers, they found that rats would come in and nibble the exposed fingers and toes. The lepers, who did not feel pain, never awoke to brush away the rats.**

There are times in our lives that we can liken our spiritual life to that of a life with leprosy. Just as leprosy can be healed through antibiotics, the effects of the lost fingers/toes/eyesight remain with the leper throughout their life.

Sometimes our iniquities (our innate wickedness) cuts off our pain receptors and we don't even realize that the sin (our offenses) are eating away at our soul. When we are made aware that this is happening, we are able to heal the disease by repenting and accepting God's forgiveness. Then we are able to learn to live with the consequences or effects that our offenses have caused.

**Physical healing:** This is not always seen here on earth in this life

**Psalm 32:3-4 (MSG)**

**3 When I kept it all inside,  
my bones turned to powder,  
my words became daylong groans.**

**4 The pressure never let up;  
all the juices of my life dried up.**

**Psalm 38:3-4 (MSG)**

**I've lost twenty pounds in two months  
because of your accusation.  
My bones are brittle as dry sticks  
because of my sin.  
I'm swamped by my bad behavior,  
collapsed under gunnysacks of guilt.**

I would daresay that most of us have been through some type of relationship problem in our lives that could have left us feeling like these passages above . . . collapsed under a gunnysack of guilt.

Let me be clear that not all physical problems are directly tied to sin. Some occur because of sin entering in our realm with Adam and Eve and the natural progression of a dying body. However, our bodies physically can carry around the weight of sin (or the guilt over past sin) in our lives. Our bodies can begin to show physiological changes when we are dealing with stress, problems, and changes in our lives.

**Chemical and Physiological/Emotional Examples: (adapted from ehow.com's article, *How Does a Broken Heart Physically Affect the Body?*)**

Let us think back to bad break ups. When you first started dating that person, you could not see that person enough. Every opportunity, if even for only five minutes you have to be around that new special person in your life. Would stay on the phone for hours, just listening to each other breath, because really who talks at 2 am?

Chemically, here is what is happening: our body makes a happy chemical called dopamine and trust chemical called oxytocin. When we, "fall in love," these chemicals increase to very high levels in our bodies. We lose the ability to critically or rationally think and see only the good in a person, we become blind to any faults. These highs of cause us to become addicted to being around that person because they increase when we see that person. When we are dumped, our body goes into withdrawal from these chemicals. We begin to seek out ways to replace that feeling of happy and trust chemicals—usually something that is not good for us. Here is where sin can creep in: lust, addictions, sex, food, alcohol, and/or drugs. Other hormones in our bodies, such as cortisol—our, "flight or fight," hormone—are affected. Depression due to lack to getting those chemical highs can set in. Loss can cause very real pain in the body because loss turns on the same "circuits" as physical pain.

Our bodies then begin to see the effects on our autonomic nervous system. The chemical changes cause all kinds of physiological problems: increased or decreased heart rate, blood pressure, digestion, sleep, crying, concentration, increased, or decreased appetite.

If we do not address the issue, the cycle of symptoms can begin a snowball effect that spills over into other areas of our health.

Now think back to when you were saved or a time when you really felt God's presence in your life. How did those first few days and weeks feel after you accepted Him as Savior in your life? I am supposing that you felt much like you did when you first fell in love. The same giddy exuberance showing to all around you. You could not wait to read His love letters to you. You shared everything with Him. In addition, I am sure there were late night phone calls of listening to each other. Just resting in Him and knowing that He loves you.

When sin creeps into our lives and we do not acknowledge it and turn from it, we are putting a wall up between us and our Love, similar to an earthly breakup. Those chemicals in our body plummet; the physiological symptoms start small and build. Guilt over sin works to increase our stress levels. We have sleeplessness, snap and tear people down.

The cure is accepting what God is offering and not constantly running back to our guilt. We daily have to turn from this world and ourselves. In **Romans 12:2** (MSG), Paul says, **Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.**

By changing the way we think, we can then release that guilt (or other recurring issue) to the Father's forgiveness.

Just as in the spiritual healing, forgiveness from our Savior is the answer or cure, but healing begins with a confession and acceptance on our part of the offenses and natural consequences of those offenses.

#### **4 Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies,**

A Sunday school teacher asked her class if they knew the difference between kindness and loving kindness. One little girl said she knew the difference. She told the teacher that kindness is like when you ask your mother for some toast and she gives it to you, but loving kindness is when you ask your mother for some toast and she gives it to you with butter and jam on it. Moreover, that is the way God is. God, in his loving kindness, is an exceedingly generous giver. He does not just give you some blessings, but He gives some 'blessins' with some butter and jam on it. God redeems us but does it abundantly with the extra butter and jam just because He loves us. If He has forgotten it, there is no reason for us to hold on to it.

**5 Who satisfies your mouth** [your necessity and desire at your personal age and situation] **with good things,**

**So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's** [strong, overcoming, soaring].

**6 The LORD executes righteousness**

**And justice** [not for me only, but] **for all who are oppressed.**

**7 He made known His ways** [of righteousness and justice] **to Moses,**

**His acts to the children of Israel.**

## **II. Character of God: Compassion**

God show immense compassion on us with all our failures. He also desires us to live with that compassion toward others.

Last week, we had a rough week with my grandmother's stroke and then death. While I was preparing to go out of town, I needed to run to the store for several things. As I pulled into Target, I saw a young woman on the side of the road, sitting in the grass with her head in her hands, very dejected looking. I saw a cardboard sign sitting in the grass next to her. I assume it was the typical "Need Help" sign for food or money. I like to think that I am a compassionate person, that I reach out and help those that are around me, but in all honesty, I rarely reach out to those people that are standing on the side of the road asking for help.

That day, as I pulled further into the parking lot, my spirit cried out "Go, give, and tell her that I love her." I had half of my supper in a to go box in the seat beside me, but thought she surely would not want my leftovers. I will run in Target and get some things for me. I went in and "had to try on" the couple of things that I "needed" to get (honestly, it was bathing suits)!

As I almost ran through the store, because my spirit was still crying out "Go, give, and tell her that I love her." I grabbed things and was back out in about 15-20 minutes. I drove back toward the main road, but she was gone. I cannot begin to describe to you the feeling of failure that I had at that moment. Immediately, my spirit grieved. I cried (and drove up and down 153 and side roads) for about 30 minutes, thinking I might find her and could obey what God told me to do. I never found her. My spirit was heavy and my shame over disobedience was even heavier. I learned that night when God speaks to us, "Go, give, and tell her that I love her," our detours or waiting to do his commands do not reflect His compassion. My desire is to accurately reflect the compassion that He bestows on us to others at the moment He prompts me.

**8 The LORD is merciful and gracious,**

**Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.**

**9 He will not always strive with us,**

**Nor will He keep His anger forever.**

**10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins,**

**Nor punished us according to our iniquities.**

Illustration from Ted Sutherland's sermon, *The Thanksgiving Catalogue*, on SermonCentral.com

"History knows no disasters," said the Literary Digest (Sept. 1923), "which parallels the earthquake and fire that visited Japan this month and laid waste the capital city and the chief seaport."

The New York Tribune called this earthquake "undoubtedly the greatest disaster in recorded time." The New York Times described the havoc as covering about 45,000 square miles which contained five big cities and a population of 7,000,000. Other dispatches reported that virtually every building in Yokohama was destroyed. Perhaps three-fourths of Tokyo was burned and the entire city with its 5,000,000 inhabitants was shattered by the earthquake.

A joint survey made by Herbert Hoover and the Red Cross estimated the dead at almost 300,000 with 2,500,000 people homeless. Disease and despair rode throughout the island empire.

Then help came! Help from America for helpless Japan! Food, clothing, medical supplies, and volunteer workers came by the shipload. The American Red Cross collected ten million dollars from people of the United States for the suffering and homeless Nipponese.

Those who lived through the awful earth tremors, the gigantic waves, and the tongues of fire must perish, it seemed, from starvation or disease. But they didn't. Why? Because America remembered—remembered their need, their suffering, their hunger.

The Nipponese were grateful. They even put their appreciation in writing. Walter Kiernan, correspondent for the International News Service, recalls their words: "Japan will never forget!"

But Japan did forget! American ships of mercy were forgotten, and the Rising Sun sent planes of destruction in return. On December 7, 1941, Japanese airplanes brought death and destruction to Pearl Harbor—and the Rising Sun proclaimed that America, brought to her knees, would beg for mercy.

But are the Japanese the only ones who overlook past mercies? Long ago the Lord said of Israel, "**My people have forgotten me days without number**" (Jer 2:32). God blessed them, but they forgot God! —R. G. Lee

If we put ourselves in this story, would we describe ourselves as, Japan or America? Do we thank God and praise Him for saving us when the bottom falls out of lives and then turn around days, months, weeks later and turn our back on Him, denying Him in our lives or maybe just not giving Him first priority?

**11 For as the heavens are high above the earth,  
So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him;  
12 As far as the east is from the west,  
So far has He removed our transgressions from us.**

Illustration from Ted Sutherland's sermon, *The Thanksgiving Catalogue*, on SermonCentral.com

A wealthy English merchant who lived on the European continent was satisfied with nothing but the best. This attitude extended even as far as the cars he owned. His pride and joy was a Rolls-Royce coupe that he had owned for years and that had given great service all that time. One day, while driving down a bumpy road, his car hit a deep pothole resulting in a broken rear axle.

The owner had the car shipped back to the Rolls plant in England and was surprised by the quick repair that was performed. He received no bill for the work and, knowing his warranty had run out, he had expected one. He waited for months and still no bill came. So he finally communicated with the company about the bill for his car repairs. Again the response from the factory was immediate. The reply said, "We have thoroughly searched our files and find no record of a Rolls-Royce axle ever breaking."

This is a case where the integrity and excellence of that company would not permit a flaw in workmanship or materials to be made known. The excellence of Christ does not permit our flaws to be made known to the Father. He accomplishes our forgiveness. —*Illustrations for Biblical Preaching*, Michael P. Green, page 154

**13 As a father pities *his* children,  
So the LORD pities those who fear Him** [with reverence, worship, and awe].

**14 For He knows our frame;  
He** [earnestly] **remembers** [on His heart] **that we *are* dust.**

**15 As for man, his days *are* like grass;  
As a flower of the field, so he flourishes.**

**16 For the wind passes over it, and it is gone,  
And its place remembers it no more.**

**17 But the mercy of the LORD *is* from everlasting to everlasting  
On those who fear Him,  
And His righteousness to children's children,**

**18 To such as keep His covenant** [hearing, receiving, loving, and obeying it],  
**And to those who** [earnestly] **remember His commandments to do them** [imprinting them on their hearts].

### III. Our response to God is the sincere praise of our soul

**19 The LORD has established His throne in heaven,  
And His kingdom rules over all.**

**20 Bless** [affectionately, gratefully praise] **the LORD, you His angels,  
Who excel in strength, who do His word,  
Heeding the voice of His word.**

**21 Bless** [affectionately, gratefully praise] **the LORD, all *you* His hosts,  
*You* ministers of His, who do His pleasure.**



**22 Bless** [affectionately, gratefully praise] **the LORD, all His works,**  
**In all places of His dominion.**

Just as with any other relationship, in order to know God more, it takes work and it takes time. But as we invest that time in His Word and in prayer, we begin to see the many facets of God that we could never even imagine existed. We see how all creation praises Him. We should continue to be amazed at Him and His character and out of that should be the natural outflow of praising Him for all that He is and does in and around us.

**Bless the LORD, O my soul!**

### **Apply (What is the point?)**

1. God's benefits are forgiveness and healing
2. God's character is compassion, mercy, patience, kindness, and forgiving others
3. Sharing God with others praises Him

### **Personalize (What do I do with that?)**

1. Remember the good and forget the bad (because He already has)
2. Accept the forgiveness repentance to heal our sin and its effects (and those physical manifestations of it)
3. Go, give, and tell them that He loves them

# Psalms and Proverbs: Godly Wisdom

---

## Preview:

Key thought:

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Proverbs 1-4 (Author = Solomon)

### Proverbs 1

#### The Beginning of Knowledge

**1** The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel:

- 2** To know wisdom and instruction,  
To perceive the words of understanding,  
**3** To receive the instruction of wisdom,  
Justice, judgment, and equity;  
**4** To give prudence to the simple,  
To the young man knowledge and discretion—  
**5** A wise *man* will hear and increase learning,  
And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel,  
**6** To understand a proverb and an enigma,  
The words of the wise and their riddles.  
**7** The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge,  
*But* fools despise wisdom and instruction.

#### Shun Evil Counsel

- 8** My son, hear the instruction of your father,  
And do not forsake the law of your mother;  
**9** For they *will be* a graceful ornament on your head,  
And chains about your neck.  
**10** My son, if sinners entice you,  
Do not consent.  
**11** If they say, “Come with us,  
Let us lie in wait to *shed* blood;  
Let us lurk secretly for the innocent without cause;  
**12** Let us swallow them alive like Sheol,  
And whole, like those who go down to the Pit;  
**13** We shall find all *kinds* of precious possessions,  
We shall fill our houses with spoil;  
**14** Cast in your lot among us,  
Let us all have one purse”—

**15 My son, do not walk in the way with them,  
Keep your foot from their path;  
16 For their feet run to evil,  
And they make haste to shed blood.  
17 Surely, in vain the net is spread  
In the sight of any bird;  
18 But they lie in wait for their *own* blood,  
They lurk secretly for their *own* lives.  
19 So *are* the ways of everyone who is greedy for gain;  
It takes away the life of its owners.**

### **The Call of Wisdom**

**20 Wisdom calls aloud outside;  
She raises her voice in the open squares.  
21 She cries out in the chief concourses,  
At the openings of the gates in the city  
She speaks her words:  
22 “How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity?  
For scorners delight in their scorning,  
And fools hate knowledge.  
23 Turn at my rebuke;  
Surely I will pour out my spirit on you;  
I will make my words known to you.  
24 Because I have called and you refused,  
I have stretched out my hand and no one regarded,  
25 Because you disdained all my counsel,  
And would have none of my rebuke,  
26 I also will laugh at your calamity;  
I will mock when your terror comes,  
27 When your terror comes like a storm,  
And your destruction comes like a whirlwind,  
When distress and anguish come upon you.  
  
28 “Then they will call on me, but I will not answer;  
They will seek me diligently, but they will not find me.  
29 Because they hated knowledge  
And did not choose the fear of the LORD,  
30 They would have none of my counsel  
*And* despised my every rebuke.  
31 Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way,  
And be filled to the full with their own fancies.  
32 For the turning away of the simple will slay them,**

And the complacency of fools will destroy them;  
**33** But whoever listens to me will dwell safely,  
And will be secure, without fear of evil."

## Proverbs 2

### The Value of Wisdom

**1** My son, if you receive my words,  
And treasure my commands within you,  
**2** So that you incline your ear to wisdom,  
And apply your heart to understanding;  
**3** Yes, if you cry out for discernment,  
And lift up your voice for understanding,  
**4** If you seek her as silver,  
And search for her as *for* hidden treasures;  
**5** Then you will understand the fear of the LORD,  
And find the knowledge of God.  
**6** For the LORD gives wisdom;  
From His mouth *come* knowledge and understanding;  
**7** He stores up sound wisdom for the upright;  
*He is* a shield to those who walk uprightly;  
**8** He guards the paths of justice,  
And preserves the way of His saints.  
**9** Then you will understand righteousness and justice,  
Equity *and* every good path.  
  
**10** When wisdom enters your heart,  
And knowledge is pleasant to your soul,  
**11** Discretion will preserve you;  
Understanding will keep you,  
**12** To deliver you from the way of evil,  
From the man who speaks perverse things,  
**13** From those who leave the paths of uprightness  
To walk in the ways of darkness;  
**14** Who rejoice in doing evil,  
And delight in the perversity of the wicked;  
**15** Whose ways *are* crooked,  
And *who are* devious in their paths;  
**16** To deliver you from the immoral woman,  
From the seductress *who* flatters with her words,  
**17** Who forsakes the companion of her youth,  
And forgets the covenant of her God.  
**18** For her house leads down to death,

And her paths to the dead;  
19 None who go to her return,  
Nor do they regain the paths of life—  
20 So you may walk in the way of goodness,  
And keep to the paths of righteousness.  
21 For the upright will dwell in the land,  
And the blameless will remain in it;  
22 But the wicked will be cut off from the earth,  
And the unfaithful will be uprooted from it.

## Proverbs 3

### Guidance for the Young

1 My son, do not forget my law,  
But let your heart keep my commands;  
2 For length of days and long life  
And peace they will add to you.

3 Let not mercy and truth forsake you;  
Bind them around your neck,  
Write them on the tablet of your heart,  
4 And so find favor and high esteem  
In the sight of God and man.

5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart,  
And lean not on your own understanding;  
6 In all your ways acknowledge Him,  
And He shall direct your paths.

7 Do not be wise in your own eyes;  
Fear the LORD and depart from evil.  
8 It will be health to your flesh,  
And strength to your bones.

9 Honor the LORD with your possessions,  
And with the firstfruits of all your increase;  
10 So your barns will be filled with plenty,  
And your vats will overflow with new wine.

11 My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD,  
Nor detest His correction;  
12 For whom the LORD loves He corrects,  
Just as a father the son *in whom* he delights.

- 13 Happy *is* the man *who* finds wisdom,  
And the man *who* gains understanding;
- 14 For her proceeds *are* better than the profits of silver,  
And her gain than fine gold.
- 15 She *is* more precious than rubies,  
And all the things you may desire cannot compare with her.
- 16 Length of days *is* in her right hand,  
In her left hand riches and honor.
- 17 Her ways *are* ways of pleasantness,  
And all her paths *are* peace.
- 18 She *is* a tree of life to those who take hold of her,  
And happy *are all* who retain her.
- 19 The LORD by wisdom founded the earth;  
By understanding He established the heavens;
- 20 By His knowledge the depths were broken up,  
And clouds drop down the dew.
- 21 My son, let them not depart from your eyes—  
Keep sound wisdom and discretion;
- 22 So they will be life to your soul  
And grace to your neck.
- 23 Then you will walk safely in your way,  
And your foot will not stumble.
- 24 When you lie down, you will not be afraid;  
Yes, you will lie down and your sleep will be sweet.
- 25 Do not be afraid of sudden terror,  
Nor of trouble from the wicked when it comes;
- 26 For the LORD will be your confidence,  
And will keep your foot from being caught.
- 27 Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due,  
When it is in the power of your hand to do so.
- 28 Do not say to your neighbor,  
“Go, and come back,  
And tomorrow I will give *it*,”  
When you have it with you.
- 29 Do not devise evil against your neighbor,  
For he dwells by you for safety’s sake.
- 30 Do not strive with a man without cause,  
If he has done you no harm.
- 31 Do not envy the oppressor,  
And choose none of his ways;

**32** For the perverse *person is* an abomination to the LORD,  
But His secret counsel *is* with the upright.

**33** The curse of the LORD *is* on the house of the wicked,  
But He blesses the home of the just.

**34** Surely He scorns the scornful,  
But gives grace to the humble.

**35** The wise shall inherit glory,  
But shame shall be the legacy of fools.

## Proverbs 4

### Security in Wisdom

**1** Hear, *my* children, the instruction of a father,  
And give attention to know understanding;

**2** For I give you good doctrine:  
Do not forsake my law.

**3** When I was my father's son,  
Tender and the only one in the sight of my mother,

**4** He also taught me, and said to me:  
"Let your heart retain my words;  
Keep my commands, and live.

**5** Get wisdom! Get understanding!  
Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth.

**6** Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you;  
Love her, and she will keep you.

**7** Wisdom *is* the principal thing;  
*Therefore* get wisdom.  
And in all your getting, get understanding.

**8** Exalt her, and she will promote you;  
She will bring you honor, when you embrace her.

**9** She will place on your head an ornament of grace;  
A crown of glory she will deliver to you."

**10** Hear, my son, and receive my sayings,  
And the years of your life will be many.

**11** I have taught you in the way of wisdom;  
I have led you in right paths.

**12** When you walk, your steps will not be hindered,  
And when you run, you will not stumble.

**13** Take firm hold of instruction, do not let go;  
Keep her, for she *is* your life.



- 14** Do not enter the path of the wicked,  
And do not walk in the way of evil.
- 15** Avoid it, do not travel on it;  
Turn away from it and pass on.
- 16** For they do not sleep unless they have done evil;  
And their sleep is taken away unless they make *someone* fall.
- 17** For they eat the bread of wickedness,  
And drink the wine of violence.
- 18** But the path of the just *is* like the shining sun,  
That shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.
- 19** The way of the wicked *is* like darkness;  
They do not know what makes them stumble.
- 20** My son, give attention to my words;  
Incline your ear to my sayings.
- 21** Do not let them depart from your eyes;  
Keep them in the midst of your heart;
- 22** For they *are* life to those who find them,  
And health to all their flesh.
- 23** Keep your heart with all diligence,  
For out of it *spring* the issues of life.
- 24** Put away from you a deceitful mouth,  
And put perverse lips far from you.
- 25** Let your eyes look straight ahead,  
And your eyelids look right before you.
- 26** Ponder the path of your feet,  
And let all your ways be established.
- 27** Do not turn to the right or the left;  
Remove your foot from evil.

Challenge:

### Apply (What is the point?)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

# Psalms and Proverbs: Proverbs of Solomon

---

## Review

Proverbs are pithy statements of truth. Proverbs are not promises. Proverbs put the feet on the Law and make it easier to apply (Terry Brown called **Proverbs** a manual for living).

## Preview: S-P-A-C-E P-E-T-S

The great truths from the Bible do not come from rushing or quickly moving through Scripture—they come from chewing slowly and putting in to practice. Wisdom is doing the right thing. Wisdom requires discernment. Discernment is knowing the right thing. Discernment requires knowledge. Knowledge of how to chew slowly can be aided by S-P-A-C-E P-E-T-S.

### From Rick Warren's *Bible Study Methods*

*Use the S-P-A-C-E P-E-T-S acrostic. This acrostic is a useful aid to meditation. Each letter represents a question that can help you apply the passage to your life. If you memorize the nine questions that this acrostic represents, you will have them available every time you want to meditate on a passage. This acrostic asks: Is there any . . .*

- Sin to confess? Do I need to make any restitution?
- Promise to claim? Is it a universal promise? Have I met the condition(s)?
- Attitude to change? Am I willing to work on a negative attitude and begin building toward a positive one?
- Command to obey? Am I willing to do it no matter how I feel?
- Example to follow? Is it a positive example for me to copy, or a negative one to avoid?
- Prayer to pray? Is there anything I need to pray back to God?
- Error to avoid? Is there any problem that I should be alert to or beware of?
- Truth to believe? What new things can I learn about God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, or other biblical teachings?
- Something to praise God for? Is there something here I can be thankful for?

Today's lesson will be self-guided. Each table has two copies of the today's text. Take a few minutes and slowly read the text and ask the S-P-A-C-E P-E-T-S questions. Write down your observations about at least two verses and then go around the table discussing each person's observations.

Key thought: Chewing slowly takes **practice**

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Proverbs 16-18 (Author = Solomon)

## Proverbs 16

- 1 The preparations of the heart *belong* to man,  
But the answer of the tongue *is* from the LORD.
- 2 All the ways of a man *are* pure in his own eyes,  
But the LORD weighs the spirits.
- 3 Commit your works to the LORD,  
And your thoughts will be established.
- 4 The LORD has made all for Himself,  
Yes, even the wicked for the day of doom.
- 5 Everyone proud in heart *is* an abomination to the LORD;  
*Though they join* forces, none will go unpunished.
- 6 In mercy and truth  
Atonement is provided for iniquity;  
And by the fear of the LORD *one* departs from evil.
- 7 When a man's ways please the LORD,  
He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.
- 8 Better *is* a little with righteousness,  
Than vast revenues without justice.
- 9 A man's heart plans his way,  
But the LORD directs his steps.
- 10 Divination *is* on the lips of the king;  
His mouth must not transgress in judgment.
- 11 Honest weights and scales *are* the LORD's;  
All the weights in the bag *are* His work.
- 12 *It is* an abomination for kings to commit wickedness,  
For a throne is established by righteousness.
- 13 Righteous lips *are* the delight of kings,  
And they love him who speaks *what is* right.
- 14 As messengers of death *is* the king's wrath,  
But a wise man will appease it.
- 15 In the light of the king's face *is* life,  
And his favor *is* like a cloud of the latter rain.
- 16 How much better to get wisdom than gold!  
And to get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver.

**17** The highway of the upright *is* to depart from evil;  
He who keeps his way preserves his soul.

**18** Pride *goes* before destruction,  
And a haughty spirit before a fall.

**19** Better *to be* of a humble spirit with the lowly,  
Than to divide the spoil with the proud.

**20** He who heeds the word wisely will find good,  
And whoever trusts in the LORD, happy *is* he.

**21** The wise in heart will be called prudent,  
And sweetness of the lips increases learning.

**22** Understanding *is* a wellspring of life to him who has it.  
But the correction of fools *is* folly.

**23** The heart of the wise teaches his mouth,  
And adds learning to his lips.

**24** Pleasant words *are like* a honeycomb,  
Sweetness to the soul and health to the bones.

**25** There is a way *that seems* right to a man,  
But its end *is* the way of death.

**26** The person who labors, labors for himself,  
For his *hungry* mouth drives him *on*.

**27** An ungodly man digs up evil,  
And *it is* on his lips like a burning fire.

**28** A perverse man sows strife,  
And a whisperer separates the best of friends.

**29** A violent man entices his neighbor,  
And leads him in a way *that is* not good.

**30** He winks his eye to devise perverse things;  
He purses his lips *and* brings about evil.

**31** The silver-haired head *is* a crown of glory,  
*If* it is found in the way of righteousness.

**32** *He who is* slow to anger *is* better than the mighty,  
And he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.

**33** The lot is cast into the lap,  
But its every decision *is* from the LORD.

## Proverbs 17

- 1 Better *is* a dry morsel with quietness,  
Than a house full of feasting *with* strife.
- 2 A wise servant will rule over a son who causes shame,  
And will share an inheritance among the brothers.
- 3 The refining pot *is* for silver and the furnace for gold,  
But the LORD tests the hearts.
- 4 An evildoer gives heed to false lips;  
A liar listens eagerly to a spiteful tongue.
- 5 He who mocks the poor reproaches his Maker;  
He who is glad at calamity will not go unpunished.
- 6 Children's children *are* the crown of old men,  
And the glory of children *is* their father.
- 7 Excellent speech is not becoming to a fool,  
Much less lying lips to a prince.
- 8 A present *is* a precious stone in the eyes of its possessor;  
Wherever he turns, he prospers.
- 9 He who covers a transgression seeks love,  
But he who repeats a matter separates friends.
- 10 Rebuke is more effective for a wise *man*  
Than a hundred blows on a fool.
- 11 An evil *man* seeks only rebellion;  
Therefore a cruel messenger will be sent against him.
- 12 Let a man meet a bear robbed of her cubs,  
Rather than a fool in his folly.
- 13 Whoever rewards evil for good,  
Evil will not depart from his house.
- 14 The beginning of strife *is like* releasing water;  
Therefore stop contention before a quarrel starts.
- 15 He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the just,  
Both of them alike *are* an abomination to the LORD.

16 *Why is there* in the hand of a fool the purchase price of wisdom,  
*Since he has* no heart *for it?*

17 A friend loves at all times,  
And a brother is born for adversity.

18 A man devoid of understanding shakes hands in a pledge,  
*And* becomes surety for his friend.

19 He who loves transgression loves strife,  
And he who exalts his gate seeks destruction.

20 He who has a deceitful heart finds no good,  
And he who has a perverse tongue falls into evil.

21 He who begets a scoffer *does so* to his sorrow,  
And the father of a fool has no joy.

22 A merry heart does good, *like* medicine,  
But a broken spirit dries the bones.

23 A wicked *man* accepts a bribe behind the back  
To pervert the ways of justice.

24 Wisdom *is* in the sight of him who has understanding,  
But the eyes of a fool *are* on the ends of the earth.

25 A foolish son *is* a grief to his father,  
And bitterness to her who bore him.

26 Also, to punish the righteous *is* not good,  
*Nor* to strike princes for *their* uprightness.

27 He who has knowledge spares his words,  
*And* a man of understanding is of a calm spirit.

28 Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace;  
*When* he shuts his lips, *he is considered* perceptive.

## Proverbs 18

**1** A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire;  
He rages against all wise judgment.

**2** A fool has no delight in understanding,  
But in expressing his own heart.

**3** When the wicked comes, contempt comes also;  
And with dishonor *comes* reproach.

**4** The words of a man's mouth *are* deep waters;  
The wellspring of wisdom *is* a flowing brook.

**5** *It is* not good to show partiality to the wicked,  
*Or* to overthrow the righteous in judgment.

**6** A fool's lips enter into contention,  
And his mouth calls for blows.

**7** A fool's mouth *is* his destruction,  
And his lips *are* the snare of his soul.

**8** The words of a talebearer *are* like tasty trifles,  
And they go down into the inmost body.

**9** He who is slothful in his work  
Is a brother to him who is a great destroyer.

**10** The name of the LORD *is* a strong tower;  
The righteous run to it and are safe.

**11** The rich man's wealth *is* his strong city,  
And like a high wall in his own esteem.

**12** Before destruction the heart of a man is haughty,  
And before honor *is* humility.

**13** He who answers a matter before he hears *it*,  
*It is* folly and shame to him.

**14** The spirit of a man will sustain him in sickness,  
But who can bear a broken spirit?

**15** The heart of the prudent acquires knowledge,  
And the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.

**16** A man's gift makes room for him,  
And brings him before great men.

**17** The first *one* to plead his cause *seems* right,  
Until his neighbor comes and examines him.

**18** Casting lots causes contentions to cease,  
And keeps the mighty apart.

**19** A brother offended *is harder to win* than a strong city,  
And contentions *are* like the bars of a castle.

**20** A man's stomach shall be satisfied from the fruit of his mouth;  
*From* the produce of his lips he shall be filled.

**21** Death and life *are* in the power of the tongue,  
And those who love it will eat its fruit.

**22** *He who* finds a wife finds a good *thing*,  
And obtains favor from the LORD.

**23** The poor *man* uses entreaties,  
But the rich answers roughly.

**24** A man *who has* friends must himself be friendly,  
But there is a friend *who* sticks closer than a brother.



Challenge: **Proverbs** is meant to be slowly unwrapped, so slow down

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. The Bible is rich
2. **Proverbs** is **dense**
3. God is not in a hurry

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Treat the Bible carefully
2. Slow down
3. Enjoy the **conversation**

# The Essential 100

## A Bible overview plan for 2011-2012

The Essential 100 (E100) is a systematic approach that guides readers through the big picture of the Bible. It is a carefully selected list of short Bible passages—50 from the Old Testament and 50 from the New Testament. Each testament is broken up into ten, five-week series. We will move from Old to New Testaments every five weeks. My goal is to teach three of the five lessons in every series.

The E100 in Sunday school: We will REAP (read, explain, apply, and personalize) one passage each week and finish a series every five weeks. Each lesson will include a key verse for memorization. At the end of two years, we will have covered the essential 100 passages in the Bible.

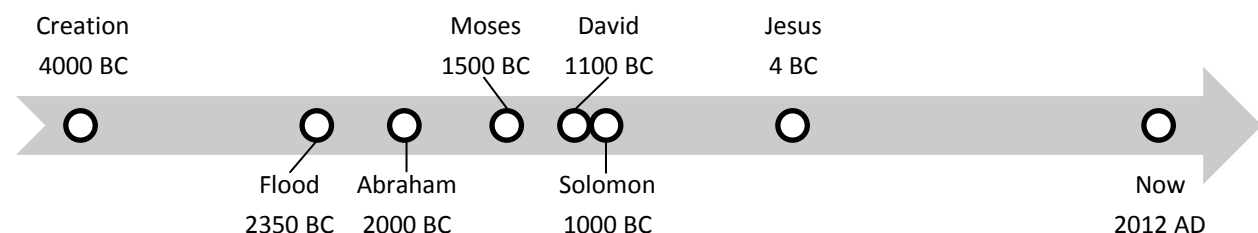
Additional information: To learn more about The E100 program and to obtain additional resources, visit [e100challenge.com](http://e100challenge.com). Our Sunday school website is [stuartheights.org/sundayschool](http://stuartheights.org/sundayschool).

## The Schedule: The Prophets

This is our tenth and last five-week series in the Old Testament. We have looked at In the Beginning, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, The Story of Joseph, Moses and the Exodus, The Law and the Land, and The Judges, The Rise of Israel, The Fall of Israel, and Psalms and Proverbs. Now, we finish with The Prophets.

Date	Lesson	Key Verse(s)	Passage	Speaker
October 14	The Suffering Servant	Isaiah 53:5	Isaiah 51:1-53:12	Terry Bolden
October 21	Jeremiah's Call and Message	Jeremiah 1:9-10	Jeremiah 1:1-3:5	Terry Bolden
October 28	Daniel in the Lions' Den	Daniel 6:21-22	Daniel 6	Jim Fleming
November 4	The Story of Jonah	Jonah 1:15-17	Jonah 1-4	Jim Fleming
November 11	The Day of Judgment	Malachi 3:5	Malachi 1-4	Jim Fleming

Assuming a literal interpretation of Bible dates, the following timeline is close:



Initially, the patriarchs received revelation from God passed it on orally to those around them. Later, the Law was given and Moses and Joshua administered it. Judges then filled the leadership needs for Israel. Prophets intermittently helped and Israel rose to power and fell under kings like Saul, David, and Solomon. Hebrew poetry emerged as a communication vehicle for truth and for the prophets.

# The Prophets: The Suffering Servant

---

## Preview: What to do when it doesn't fit

This passage does not fit in the box that the Jews created for God (i.e., the broom in the box) in the Old Testament.

Key thought:

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Isaiah 51:1-53:12 (Author = Isaiah)

1. A Promising Beginning ([Isaiah 51:1-8](#))
2. A Promised Future ([Isaiah 51:8-51:11](#)) – and there is more yet for the Jews that is yet to be fulfilled
3. A Painful History ([Isaiah 51:12-52:12](#))
4. A Perplexing Answer ([Isaiah 52:13-53:12](#)) – the Jews wanted a conquering Messiah, but Isaiah gave them a suffering servant

## Isaiah 51

### The LORD Comforts Zion

**1 “Listen to Me [first], you who follow after righteousness,**

**You who seek the LORD:**

**Look to the rock *from which* you were hewn,**

**And to the hole of the pit *from which* you were dug.**

**2 Look to Abraham your father,**

**And to Sarah *who bore* you;**

**For I called him alone,**

**And blessed him and increased him.”**

**3 For the LORD will comfort Zion,**

**He will comfort all her waste places;**

**He will make her wilderness like Eden,**

**And her desert like the garden of the LORD;**

**Joy and gladness will be found in it,**

**Thanksgiving and the voice of melody.**

**4 “Listen to Me [second], My people;**

**And give ear to Me, O My nation:**

**For law will proceed from Me,**

**And I will make My justice rest**

**As a light of the peoples.**

**5 My righteousness *is* near,**

**My salvation has gone forth,**

**And My arms will judge the peoples;**

The coastlands will wait upon Me,  
And on My arm they will trust.

6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens,  
And look on the earth beneath.  
For the heavens will vanish away like smoke,  
The earth will grow old like a garment,  
And those who dwell in it will die in like manner;  
But My salvation will be forever,  
And My righteousness will not be abolished.

7 “Listen to Me [third], you who know righteousness,  
You people in whose heart *is* My law:  
Do not fear the reproach of men,  
Nor be afraid of their insults.

8 For the moth will eat them up like a garment,  
And the worm will eat them like wool;  
But My righteousness will be forever,  
And My salvation from generation to generation.”

9 Awake, awake, put on strength,  
O arm of the LORD!  
Awake as in the ancient days,  
In the generations of old.  
*Are You not the arm* that cut Rahab apart,  
*And* wounded the serpent?

10 *Are You not the One* who dried up the sea,  
The waters of the great deep;  
That made the depths of the sea a road  
For the redeemed to cross over?

11 So the ransomed of the LORD shall return,  
And come to Zion with singing,  
With everlasting joy on their heads.  
They shall obtain joy and gladness;  
Sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

12 “I, *even I, am* He who comforts you.  
Who *are* you that you should be afraid  
Of a man *who* will die,  
And of the son of a man *who* will be made like grass?

13 And you forget the LORD your Maker,  
Who stretched out the heavens  
And laid the foundations of the earth;

You have feared continually every day  
Because of the fury of the oppressor,  
When *he has* prepared to destroy.  
And where *is* the fury of the oppressor?  
**14** The captive exile hastens, that he may be loosed,  
That he should not die in the pit,  
And that his bread should not fail.  
**15** But I *am* the LORD your God,  
Who divided the sea whose waves roared—  
The LORD of hosts *is* His name.  
**16** And I have put My words in your mouth;  
I have covered you with the shadow of My hand,  
That I may plant the heavens,  
Lay the foundations of the earth,  
And say to Zion, ‘You *are* My people.’”

### God's Fury Removed

**17** Awake, awake!  
Stand up, O Jerusalem,  
You who have drunk at the hand of the LORD  
The cup of His fury;  
You have drunk the dregs of the cup of trembling,  
And drained *it* out.  
**18** *There is* no one to guide her  
Among all the sons she has brought forth;  
Nor *is there any* who takes her by the hand  
Among all the sons she has brought up.  
**19** These two *things* have come to you;  
Who will be sorry for you?—  
Desolation and destruction, famine and sword—  
By whom will I comfort you?  
**20** Your sons have fainted,  
They lie at the head of all the streets,  
Like an antelope in a net;  
They are full of the fury of the LORD,  
The rebuke of your God.  
**21** Therefore please hear this, you afflicted,  
And drunk but not with wine.  
**22** Thus says your Lord,  
The LORD and your God,  
*Who* pleads the cause of His people:

"See, I have taken out of your hand  
The cup of trembling,  
The dregs of the cup of My fury;  
You shall no longer drink it.  
**23** But I will put it into the hand of those who afflict you,  
Who have said to you,  
'Lie down, that we may walk over you.'  
And you have laid your body like the ground,  
And as the street, for those who walk over."

## Isaiah 52

### God Redeems Jerusalem

**1** Awake, awake!  
Put on your strength, O Zion;  
Put on your beautiful garments,  
O Jerusalem, the holy city!  
For the uncircumcised and the unclean  
Shall no longer come to you.  
**2** Shake yourself from the dust, arise;  
Sit down, O Jerusalem!  
Loose yourself from the bonds of your neck,  
O captive daughter of Zion!

**3** For thus says the LORD:

"You have sold yourselves for nothing,  
And you shall be redeemed without money."

**4** For thus says the Lord GOD:

"My people went down at first  
Into Egypt to dwell there;  
Then the Assyrian oppressed them without cause.  
**5** Now therefore, what have I here," says the LORD,  
"That My people are taken away for nothing?  
Those who rule over them  
Make them wail," says the LORD,  
"And My name is blasphemed continually every day."

**6** Therefore My people shall know My name;  
Therefore *they shall know* in that day  
That I *am* He who speaks:  
'Behold, it is I.'"

**7** How beautiful upon the mountains  
Are the feet of him who brings good news,  
Who proclaims peace,  
Who brings glad tidings of good *things*,  
Who proclaims salvation,  
Who says to Zion,  
“Your God reigns!”

**8** Your watchmen shall lift up *their* voices,  
With their voices they shall sing together;  
For they shall see eye to eye  
When the LORD brings back Zion.

**9** Break forth into joy, sing together,  
You waste places of Jerusalem!  
For the LORD has comforted His people,  
He has redeemed Jerusalem.

**10** The LORD has made bare His holy arm  
In the eyes of all the nations;  
And all the ends of the earth shall see  
The salvation of our God.

**11** Depart! Depart! Go out from there,  
Touch no unclean *thing*;  
Go out from the midst of her,  
Be clean,  
You who bear the vessels of the LORD.

**12** For you shall not go out with haste,  
Nor go by flight;  
For the LORD will go before you,  
And the God of Israel *will be* your rear guard.

### The Sin-Bearing Servant

**13** Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently;  
He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high.

**14** Just as many were astonished at you,  
So His visage was marred more than any man,  
And His form more than the sons of men;

**15** So shall He sprinkle many nations.  
Kings shall shut their mouths at Him;  
For what had not been told them they shall see,  
And what they had not heard they shall consider.

## Isaiah 53

**1** Who has believed our report?

And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

**2** For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant,

And as a root out of dry ground.

He has no form or comeliness;

And when we see Him,

*There is no beauty that we should desire Him.*

**3** He is despised and rejected by men,

A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

And we hid, as it were, *our* faces from Him;

He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

**4** Surely He has borne our griefs

And carried our sorrows;

Yet we esteemed Him stricken,

Smitten by God, and afflicted.

**5** But He *was* wounded for our transgressions,

*He was* bruised for our iniquities;

The chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him,

And by His stripes we are healed.

**6** All we like sheep have gone astray;

We have turned, every one, to his own way;

And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

**7** He was oppressed and He was afflicted,

Yet He opened not His mouth;

He was led as a lamb to the slaughter,

And as a sheep before its shearers is silent,

So He opened not His mouth.

**8** He was taken from prison and from judgment,

And who will declare His generation?

For He was cut off from the land of the living;

For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.

**9** And they made His grave with the wicked—

But with the rich at His death,

Because He had done no violence,

Nor *was any* deceit in His mouth.

**10** Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him;

He has put *Him* to grief.

When You make His soul an offering for sin,

He shall see *His* seed, He shall prolong *His* days,



**And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.**

**11 He shall see the labor of His soul, *and* be satisfied.**

**By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many,  
For He shall bear their iniquities.**

**12 Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great,**

**And He shall divide the spoil with the strong,**

**Because He poured out His soul unto death,**

**And He was numbered with the transgressors,**

**And He bore the sin of many,**

**And made intercession for the transgressors.**

Challenge: Get to know Jesus intentionally and personally. If you don't know how it works, you may not reap the intended benefits and someone may get hurt.

### **Apply (What is the point?)**

1. All of God's Word is important
2. God's plan and work are still being done today
3. Jesus is the fulfillment and focus of God's plan

### **Personalize (What do I do with that?)**

1. Read/study all of God's Word
2. Get in on God's plan
3. Get to know Jesus intimately!

The box that God is in is us

# The Prophets: Jeremiah's Call and Message

---

## Preview:

Jeremiah's ministry spanned from Josiah to Habakkuk/Daniel/Ezekiel. This was during a major cultural revolution period in Greece (at the same time Aesop's Fables were written). Israel had been in captivity for 100 years and Judah is declining (and then comes [Jeremiah 1](#)).

Key thought:

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Jeremiah 1:1-3:5 (Author = Jeremiah)

The **call** of man ([Jeremiah 1](#))

The **fall** of man ([Jeremiah 2](#))

The **love** for man ([Jeremiah 3](#))

## Jeremiah 1

**1** The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, **2** to whom the word of the LORD came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. **3** It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month.

## The Prophet Is Called

**4** Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying:

**5** "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you;

Before you were born I sanctified you;

I ordained you a prophet to the nations." [Paul says the same thing about himself in Galatians 1 and [2 Thessalonians 2](#). Jesus says approximately the same thing in [John 15](#) about His disciples.]

**6** Then said I:

"Ah, Lord GOD!

Behold, I cannot speak, for I *am* a youth."

**7** But the LORD said to me:

"Do not say, 'I *am* a youth,'

For you shall go to all to whom I send you,

And whatever I command you, you shall speak.

**8** Do not be afraid of their faces,

For I *am* with you to deliver you," says the LORD.

**9 Then the LORD put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me:**

**"Behold, I have put My words in your mouth.**

**10 See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms,  
To root out and to pull down,  
To destroy and to throw down,  
To build and to plant."**

**11 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, "Jeremiah, what do you see?"**

**And I said, "I see a branch** [or rod—associated with judgment in the Bible] **of an almond tree** [the almond tree blossoms first and the word in Hebrew means, 'hasty'—said of the soon-coming judgment]."

**12 Then the LORD said to me, "You have seen well, for I am ready to perform My word."** [The prophet sees something else that others do not see so that others can see God]

**13 And the word of the LORD came to me the second time, saying, "What do you see?"**

**And I said, "I see a boiling pot** [there is much activity with boiling water, but there is no impact—the water moves around, but just evaporates], **and it is facing away from the north."**

**14 Then the LORD said to me:**

**"Out of the north calamity shall break forth  
On all the inhabitants of the land.**

**15 For behold, I am calling  
All the families of the kingdoms of the north," says the LORD;  
"They shall come and each one set his throne  
At the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem,  
Against all its walls all around,  
And against all the cities of Judah.**

**16 I will utter My judgments  
Against them concerning all their wickedness,  
Because they have forsaken Me,  
Burned incense to other gods,  
And worshiped the works of their own hands.**

**17 "Therefore prepare yourself and arise,  
And speak to them all that I command you.  
Do not be dismayed before their faces,  
Lest I dismay you before them.**

**18 For behold, I have made you this day  
A fortified city and an iron pillar,  
And bronze walls against the whole land—**

Against the kings of Judah,  
Against its princes,  
Against its priests,  
And against the people of the land.  
**19** They will fight against you,  
But they shall not prevail against you.  
For I *am* with you," says the LORD, "to deliver you."

## Jeremiah 2

### God's Case Against Israel

**1** Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying,  
  
**2** "Go and cry in the hearing of Jerusalem, saying, 'Thus says the LORD:  
"I remember you,  
The kindness of your youth,  
The love of your betrothal,  
When you went after Me in the wilderness,  
In a land not sown. [Apparently, the Lord views this as the 'good old days' because Israel repented—so  
He focused on the good and not the evil]  
**3** Israel *was* holiness to the LORD,  
The firstfruits of His increase.  
All that devour him will offend;  
Disaster will come upon them," says the LORD.'" [Now we move into the present]  
  
**4** Hear the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob and all the families of the house of Israel. **5** Thus says  
the LORD:  
  
"What injustice have your fathers found in Me,  
That they have gone far from Me,  
Have followed idols,  
And have become idolaters?  
**6** Neither did they say, 'Where *is* the LORD,  
Who brought us up out of the land of Egypt,  
Who led us through the wilderness,  
Through a land of deserts and pits,  
Through a land of drought and the shadow of death,  
Through a land that no one crossed  
And where no one dwelt?'  
**7** I brought you into a bountiful country,  
To eat its fruit and its goodness.  
But when you entered, you defiled My land  
And made My heritage an abomination.

**8** The priests did not say, 'Where *is* the LORD?' [the leaders do not know God]  
And those who handle the law did not know Me;  
The rulers also transgressed against Me;  
The prophets prophesied by Baal,  
And walked after *things that* do not profit.

**9** "Therefore I will yet bring charges against you," says the LORD,  
"And against your children's children I will bring charges.

**10** For pass beyond the coasts of Cyprus and see,  
Send to Kedar and consider diligently,  
And see if there has been such *a thing*.

**11** Has a nation changed *its* gods,  
Which *are* not gods?  
But My people have changed their Glory  
For *what* does not profit.

**12** Be astonished, O heavens, at this,  
And be horribly afraid;  
Be very desolate," says the LORD.

**13** "For My people have committed two evils:  
They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters,  
And hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water.

**14** "Is Israel a servant?  
Is he a homeborn *slave*?  
Why is he plundered?

**15** The young lions roared at him, *and* growled;  
They made his land waste;  
His cities are burned, without inhabitant.

**16** Also the people of Noph and Tahpanhes  
Have broken the crown of your head.

**17** Have you not brought this on yourself,  
In that you have forsaken the LORD your God  
When He led you in the way?

**18** And now why take the road to Egypt,  
To drink the waters of Sihor?  
Or why take the road to Assyria,  
To drink the waters of the River?

**19** Your own wickedness will correct you,  
And your backslidings will rebuke you.  
Know therefore and see that *it is* an evil and bitter *thing*  
That you have forsaken the LORD your God,

**And the fear of Me is not in you,"**

**Says the Lord GOD of hosts.** [They were looking everywhere for help except with God]

**20 "For of old I have broken your yoke *and* burst your bonds;**

**And you said, 'I will not transgress,'**

**When on every high hill and under every green tree**

**You lay down, playing the harlot.** [idolatry]

**21 Yet I had planted you a noble vine, a seed of highest quality.**

**How then have you turned before Me**

**Into the degenerate plant of an alien vine?**

**22 For though you wash yourself with lye, and use much soap,**

**Yet your iniquity is marked before Me," says the Lord GOD.**

**23 "How can you say, 'I am not polluted,**

**I have not gone after the Baals'? [they were including other gods into the worship of Yahweh]**

**See your way in the valley** [literally, the valley used for baby sacrifice—indicating their immunity to their sins];

**Know what you have done:**

**You are a swift dromedary breaking loose in her ways,**

**24 A wild donkey used to the wilderness,**

**That sniffs at the wind in her desire;**

**In her time of mating, who can turn her away?**

**All those who seek her will not weary themselves;**

**In her month they will find her.**

**25 Withhold your foot from being unshod, and your throat from thirst.**

**But you said, 'There is no hope.**

**No! For I have loved aliens, and after them I will go.'**

**26 "As the thief is ashamed when he is found out,**

**So is the house of Israel ashamed;**

**They and their kings and their princes, and their priests and their prophets,**

**27 Saying to a tree, 'You are my father,'**

**And to a stone, 'You gave birth to me.'**

**For they have turned *their* back to Me, and not *their* face.**

**But in the time of their trouble**

**They will say, 'Arise and save us.'**

**28 But where *are* your gods that you have made for yourselves?**

**Let them arise,**

**If they can save you in the time of your trouble;**

**For *according to* the number of your cities**

**Are your gods, O Judah.**

**29 "Why will you plead with Me?**

**You all have transgressed against Me," says the LORD.**

**30 "In vain I have chastened your children;**

**They received no correction.**

**Your sword has devoured your prophets**

**Like a destroying lion.**

**31 "O generation, see the word of the LORD!**

**Have I been a wilderness to Israel,**

**Or a land of darkness?**

**Why do My people say, 'We are lords;**

**We will come no more to You'?**

**32 Can a virgin forget her ornaments,**

**Or a bride her attire?**

**Yet My people have forgotten Me days without number.**

**33 "Why do you beautify your way to seek love?**

**Therefore you have also taught**

**The wicked women your ways.**

**34 Also on your skirts is found**

**The blood of the lives of the poor innocents.**

**I have not found it by secret search,**

**But plainly on all these things.**

**35 Yet you say, 'Because I am innocent,**

**Surely His anger shall turn from me.'**

**Behold, I will plead My case against you,**

**Because you say, 'I have not sinned.' [they do not understand]**

**36 Why do you gad about so much to change your way?**

**Also you shall be ashamed of Egypt as you were ashamed of Assyria.**

**37 Indeed you will go forth from him**

**With your hands on your head;**

**For the LORD has rejected your trusted allies,**

**And you will not prosper by them.**

## **Jeremiah 3**

### **Israel Is Shameless**

**1 "They say, 'If a man divorces his wife,**

**And she goes from him**

**And becomes another man's,**

**May he return to her again?'**

**Would not that land be greatly polluted?**

**But you have played the harlot with many lovers;  
Yet return to Me," says the LORD.**

**2 "Lift up your eyes to the desolate heights and see:**

**Where have you not lain *with men*?**

**By the road you have sat for them**

**Like an Arabian in the wilderness;**

**And you have polluted the land**

**With your harlotries and your wickedness.**

**3 Therefore the showers have been withheld,**

**And there has been no latter rain.**

**You have had a harlot's forehead; [a red forehead of shame]**

**You refuse to be ashamed.**

**4 Will you not from this time cry to Me,**

**'My Father, You *are* the guide of my youth?**

**5 Will He remain angry forever?**

**Will He keep it to the end?'**

**Behold, you have spoken and done evil things,**

**As you were able."**

Challenge: The Jews' story is my story. The call of man is about me. The fall of man is me.

### **Apply (What is the point?)**

1. God calls all to repentance
2. We all struggle with sin
3. God loves you

### **Personalize (What do I do with that?)**

1. Answer the door
2. Keep answering
3. Live in the shadow of the cross

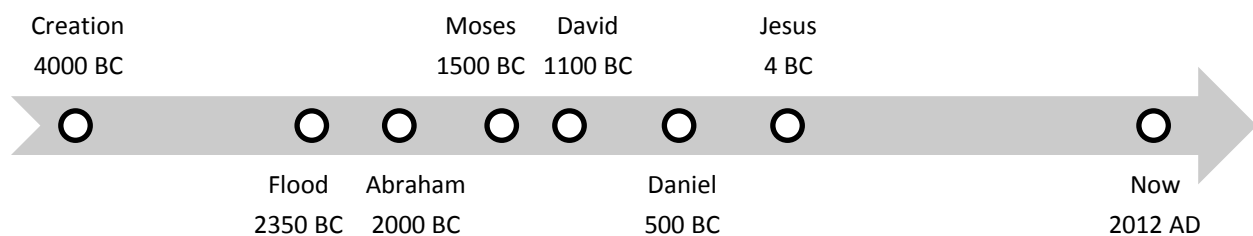


# The Prophets: Daniel in the Lions' Den

## Overview: The Prophets

The prophets were an eclectic group of missionaries (internal and external) who **spoke** on behalf of God. Their ministries spanned several hundred years and served as the caulk of the Old Testament.

These **17** books (from **Isaiah** to **Malachi**) constitute 21% of the Bible's words. They served throughout a variety of circumstances (captivity, freedom, during good kings, and during evil kings). There were other prophets than the 17 who have their own books, so categorizing them neatly quickly becomes difficult.



Old Testament (39 Books)			New Testament (27 Books)	
<b>Law (5)</b> Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	<b>Poetry (5)</b> Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon	<b>Major Prophets (5)</b> Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel	<b>Gospels (4)</b> Matthew Mark Luke John	<b>Letters to People (4)</b> 1 Timothy 2 Timothy Titus Philemon
<b>History (12)</b> Joshua Judges Ruth 1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 2 Kings 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah Esther		<b>Minor Prophets (12)</b> Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi	<b>History (1)</b> Acts	<b>Paul's Letters to Churches (9)</b> Romans 1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians
			<b>General Letters (9)</b> Hebrews James 1 Peter 2 Peter 1 John 2 John 3 John Jude Revelation	

## Preview

**David Guzik:** This has long been a beloved Bible story—and no wonder. There are so many dramatic features in this story—the jealousy of political subordinates; the vanity of a king; the integrity of a man; the power and preservation of God; and some wild animals and violence!

Side note: This text is in Aramaic, not Hebrew, so I really struggled with the language differences—I got a good, healthy dose of, 'this stuff can be very intimidating for people that don't regularly engage with it.' I think it was quite healthy for me to be confused during study.

**Adam Clarke:** How mighty is faith? . . . See [Hebrews 11:1-40](#)

Key thought: **Lions** (and tigers and bears) are not a problem for God

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Daniel 6 (Author = Daniel)

### The Plot Against Daniel

**1 It pleased Darius** [Coffman: Darius the Mede was none other than Cyrus' great general Gobryas who actually captured Babylon and held the government for a couple or three years until Cyrus the real king could take over the government] **to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty** [it was 127 in [Esther 1:1](#)] **satraps** [governor of a Persian province], **to be over the whole kingdom; 2 and over these, three governors** [chief, overseer], **of whom Daniel** [John Gill: [Daniel] **was now an old man, having been about seventy** years in Babylon. Treasury of Scripture Knowledge: Daniel had now been employed full sixty-five years as prime minister under the kings of Babylon.] **was one, that the satraps might give account to them, so that the king would suffer no loss** [because the king understood that levels of management are a good thing to insure no fraud, waste, or abuse]. **3 Then this Daniel distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, because an excellent** [pre-eminent, surpassing, extreme, extraordinary; prerequisite #1: an excellent spirit] **spirit was in him; and the king gave thought** [planned] **to setting him over the whole realm** [kingdom]. **4 So the governors and satraps sought to find some charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom** [how many of them, we do not know, but there were only two other governors and there were a plural number of satraps, so that is at minimum four]; **but they could find no charge or fault** [corruption; think about how hard it would be to have no one be able to find any corruption with your work—especially people with resources like these satraps would have had], **because he was faithful** [trustworthy]; **nor was there any error** [neglect, remissness] **or fault** [corruption] **found in him** [David Guzik: there were no **skeletons** in Daniel's closet]. **5 Then these men said, "We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God."** [Jamieson, Fausset, Brown: It is the highest testimony to a godly man's walk, when his most watchful enemies can find no ground of censure save in that he walks according to the law of God even where it opposes the ways of the world. David Guzik: The world may not know the intricacies of doctrine or the intimacies of worship with God but they can tell a bad temper, selfishness, conceitedness or dishonesty when they see it. Maclaren: The world is a very poor critic of my Christianity, but it is a very sufficient one of my conduct.]

**6** So these governors and satraps thronged before the king, and said thus to him: “King Darius, live forever [flattery?]**!** **7** All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions [First, this was a lie—they said, “all.” “All” would have included Daniel—who certainly did not agree. Second, think about a man who would keep a den of lions on hand for punishment—this man did not mess around. **Coffman: Biblical enemies never overlook anything, no matter how trivial, as a possible grounds for complaint; and therefore it is not surprising that some would allege a disunity in Daniel on the grounds that “the fiery furnace” was the means of execution in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, while here it is “the lions’ den!” Nebuchadnezzar’s kingdom was Chaldean, however; and the kingdom here is that of the Medes and Persians. Robert D. Culver (Wycliffe Bible Commentary, Daniel): The Persians, being Zoroastrians, held fire to be sacred. Hence for them it would have been improper to cremate or execute by fire.]. **8** Now, O king, establish the decree and sign the writing, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter [Coffman: The laws remained unchangeable and irrevocable, because the king was regarded and honored as the incarnation of deity, who is unerring and cannot change].” **9** Therefore King Darius signed the written decree.**

### Daniel in the Lions' Den

**10** Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home [John Gill: He did not solicit the abrogation of it, knowing it was in vain; nor did he go to the king with complaints against his enemies]. And in his upper room [roof chamber], with his windows open toward Jerusalem [Why toward Jerusalem? **1 Kings 8:48** (Solomon told them to do it this way)], he knelt down on his knees three times [Psalm 55:17] that day, and prayed and gave thanks [praised, gave thanks] before his God, as was his custom since early days. [Prerequisite #2: consistency. Daniel purposefully and deliberately disobeyed the law of the land—because this law violated God’s Law. It is wholly right to disobey man’s laws when they violate God’s laws. I am very thankful that I live in a country where I can freely say that, but it is true whether or not freedom of speech exists. **Jamieson, Fausset, Brown: Though having vast business as a ruler of the empire, he finds time to pray thrice a day.**]

**11** Then these men assembled [to gather in a tumultuous throng, show tumultuousness, come thronging] and found Daniel praying and making supplication [asking for favor] before his God. **12** And they went before the king, and spoke concerning the king’s decree: “Have you not signed a decree that every man who petitions any god or man within thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?”

The king answered and said, “The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter.”

**13** So they answered and said before the king, “That Daniel, who is one of the captives from Judah, does not show due regard for you, O king, or for the decree that you have signed [Two more lies: **David Guzik: Daniel intended no disrespect for the king, only a higher respect for God**], but makes his petition three times a day.”

**14** And the king, when he heard *these* words, was greatly displeased with himself [Adam Clarke: And well he might, when through his excessive folly he passed a law that, for its ostensible object, would have been a disgrace almost to an idiot], and set *his* heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him. **15** Then these men approached the king, and said to the king, "Know, O king, that *it is* the law of the Medes and Persians that no decree or statute which the king establishes may be changed."

**16** So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast *him* into the den of lions. *But* the king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you." **17** Then a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signets of his lords, that the purpose [thing] concerning Daniel might not be changed.

### Daniel Saved from the Lions

**18** Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no musicians [a **broad** word meaning diversions, musical instruments, dancing girls, concubines, music] **were brought before him.** Also his sleep went [fled] from him. [Jamieson, Fausset, Brown: He is sorry for the evil which he himself had caused, yet takes no steps to remedy it. There are many such halters between good and bad, who are ill at ease in their sins, yet go forward in them, and are drawn on by others.] **19** Then the king arose [stood up] **very early in the morning** [at dawn] and went in haste to the den of lions. **20** And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting [grief-filled, painful] voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?"

**21** Then Daniel said [To the dismay and disbelief of his accusers—Daniel spoke! Coffman: These enemies . . . overlooked the **will** of God, which is a universal characteristic of all wicked men] **to the king**, "O king, live forever! **22** My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths [Similarly, our God can shut the roaring lion's mouth that seeks to devour us today as well—1 Peter 5:8], **so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong** [hurtful act, crime, harm, wicked deed, wrong] **before you."**

**23** Now the king was exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him [John Gill: [not even a] **bruise by throwing him into the den**], because he believed in his God.

### Darius Honors God

**24** And the king gave the command, and they brought those men who had accused [the word literally means denounced, slandered, accused maliciously, **chewed** on, eaten or devoured him with their words] **Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions** [we do not know how many of the other 122 were cast in; John Gill: Often the pit wicked men dig for others, they fall into themselves; so Haman man was hanged on the gallows he prepared for Mordecai]—**them, their children, and their wives** [Jamieson, Fausset, Brown: Among the Persians, all the kindred were involved in the guilt of one culprit. The Mosaic law expressly forbade this (Deuteronomy 24:16).]; and the lions overpowered them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den.

**25 Then King Darius wrote:**

**To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth:**

**Peace be multiplied to you.**

**26 I make a decree that in every dominion [sovereignty, realm] of my kingdom *men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel.***

**For He *is* the living God,**

**And steadfast [secure, enduring] *forever*;**

**His kingdom *is the one which shall not be destroyed*,**

**And His dominion [sovereignty, realm] *shall endure to the end*** [very similar to Nebuchadnezzar's words in **Daniel 2:44**].

**27 He delivers and rescues [to rescue, extricate, deliver],**

**And He works signs [miraculous signs, wonders] and wonders [wonders, miracles]**

**In heaven and on earth,**

**Who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.**

**28 So this Daniel prospered [prospered, was successful] in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.** [Adam Clarke: He had served *five kings: Nebuchadnezzar, Evil-merodach, Belshazzar, Darius, and Cyrus* (this was abnormal because usually you did not survive regime changes)]

Challenge: Live a blameless life of quiet obedience

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. **Lions** are not a problem for God (they usually turn out to be kitty cats)
2. Lions are a **problem** for me
3. Disobedience to an ungodly law can be obedience to God

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Stop **staring** at the lions
2. Start serving the Lord
3. Know how to apply the Word

# The Prophets: The Story of Jonah

---

## Preview: Anywhere but Nineveh (or, the Suicidal Missionary)

The book of **Jonah** has 1,296 words, 47 verses, 4 chapters, and 1 incredible story. It takes place between 786 BC and 746 BC—about the time of the first recorded Olympic Games and the founding of Rome.

## Introduction

1. Jonah was a **real** man. The name 'Jonah' only shows up in **2 Kings 14**, the book of **Jonah**, and in the NT rehearsals of the book of **Jonah**. Jonah is also mentioned in the Koran as a prophet of Islam. Jesus references Jonah at least two different times (**Matthew 12:39-41**, **Matthew 16:4**, and **Luke 11:29-32**) with **Matthew 12:39-41** being the most thorough. Jesus thought Jonah was real and used Jonah and the Ninevites in His preaching.

2. Jonah is a type of Christ. **Wikipedia: Jonah spent three days in the belly of the fish; Jesus will spend three days in the ground. . . . Jesus compares his generation to the people of Nineveh. Jesus fulfills his role as a type of Jonah; however his generation fails to fulfill its role as a type of Nineveh. Nineveh repented but [Jesus'] generation . . . fails to repent.**

3. The book of **Jonah** is not about a **fish**. The fish is a prop used by God to bring Jonah face to face with his issues. **Jonah** is about one man's journey with his relentless God that will not allow him to run away.

## Overview of the Four Chapters of Jonah

**Jonah 1:** God's call and Jonah's run (Pitching)

**Jonah 2:** Jonah's prayer and God's mercy (Praying)

**Jonah 3:** God's call and Jonah's obedience (Preaching)

**Jonah 4:** Jonah's bitterness and God's heart (Pouting)

A theme throughout the book of **Jonah** is that God models the behavior He is looking for in Jonah—in **Jonah 1**, God models persistence; in **Jonah 2**, God models compassion; in **Jonah 3**, God models repentance; in **Jonah 4**, God models love. **J. Vernon McGee: Jonah's story is an illustration of how God treats His children when they sin and come back to Him.** This is something we can all relate to.

Key thought: When we run from God, we agree to a **miserable** life



## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Jonah 1-4 (Author = Unknown)

### Jonah 1 (Pitching)

#### Jonah's Disobedience (1-3)

**1 Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah** ['Jonah' means 'dove.' Jamieson, Fausset, Brown: **Compare Genesis 8:8-9, where the dove in vain seeks rest after flying from Noah and the ark: so Jonah**] **the son of Amittai** [my truth], **saying, 2 "Arise, go** [an imperative] **to Nineveh, that great city** [We are introduced to Nineveh in **Genesis 10:8-12. Adam Clarke on Nineveh: This was the capital of the Assyrian empire, and one of the most ancient cities of the world, Genesis 10:10-11; and one of the largest, as it was three days' journey in circumference. . . . It is reported to have had walls one hundred feet high, and so broad that three chariots might run abreast upon them.** It had several hundred thousand people (probably more than a million based on 120,000 that were too small to know their right hand from their left as is stated in **Jonah 4:11**). **Nahum 3:1-7** gives a great picture of how God felt about the wickedness of the Ninevites. The Ninevites were brutal butchers—they would stack up piles of body parts of their enemies. You did not want to go to Nineveh.], **and cry out** [another imperative] **against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me** [literally, 'in my face']."] [Observation: God never sent Old Testament prophets to other countries to prophecy against them. He sent prophets to Israel. Jonah is the **first** missionary. Except for Jonah, spreading the message of Yahweh involved telling people that came to Israel about Him up until the time of Jesus. However, Jesus told His disciples to, "Go," just as Jonah was told to, "Go." God changed His method (not His message) with Jonah.] **3 But Jonah arose to flee** [run away] **to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down** [to travel, but also used to describe sinking] **to Joppa** [beautiful], **and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare** [wages], **and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.**

#### The Storm at Sea (4-9)

**4 But the LORD sent** [threw/pitched—first time] **out a great wind on the sea, and there was a mighty tempest** [whirlwind or storm] **on the sea, so that the ship was about to be** [literally, the sailors on the ship thought it would be] **broken up.** [David Guzik: **We often think of Jesus calming the waters, and He can do that. But He can also stir up the storm.**]

**5 Then the mariners were afraid; and every man cried out to his god** [How often in our lives do we turn to our 'own gods?'], **and threw** [pitched—the second time] **the cargo that was in the ship into the sea, to lighten the load. But Jonah had gone down into the lowest parts of the ship, had lain down, and was fast asleep** [the same word used to describe Sisera's sleep when Jael put a nail through his temple, but not as strong as what God put Adam under in **Genesis 2:21**]. [Jonah is able to sleep through the storm, as Jesus was sleeping through the storm in **Matthew 8:24**. However, peace in the midst of a storm should not guarantee us that we are in God's will (it simply means we can sleep through a storm).]

**6 So the captain** [literally, the chief sailor] **came to him, and said to him, "What do you mean, sleeper? Arise, call on your God** [The irony is obvious in that: (1) Jonah was trying to get away from God and this pagan is asking him to call on his God, and (2) Jonah was commanded by God to rebuke pagans (Ninevites) and Jonah is being rebuked by a pagan.]; **perhaps your God will consider us** [think about

us—his words display his theology, for the captain's god was not always thinking about the captain—but our God is constantly thinking about us as in **Psalm 40:5b**, **so that we may not perish** [be lost].”

**7 And they said to one another, “Come, let us cast lots** [pebbles], **that we may know for whose cause this trouble** [evil, calamity, distress, misery] **has come upon us.” So they cast lots, and the lot fell** [settled] **on Jonah** [Was God OK with this? See **Joshua 7**, **Proverbs 16:33**; and **Acts 1:26**]. **8 Then they said to him, “Please tell us** [another imperative meaning to publish, declare, proclaim—these are the words used in the New Testament for evangelism—imagine pagans asking you to do this]! **For whose cause is this trouble upon us? What is your occupation** [business]? **And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?”** [They decide now is the time to play 20 questions]

**9 So he said to them, “I am a Hebrew** [literally, ‘one from beyond’]; **and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven** [Jonah is addressing their fears], **who made the sea** [again addressing their fears] **and the dry land** [now he switches to addressing their hopes].” [Jonah is addressing the fact that Jehovah is the God of **all** three locations whereas the pagans probably had three different gods for these three locations.]

### Jonah Thrown into the Sea (10-17)

**10 Then the men were exceedingly afraid** [extreme terror], **and said to him, “Why have you done this?”** For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them. **11 Then they said to him, “What shall we do to you that the sea may be calm for us?”—for the sea was growing more tempestuous** [stormy].

**12 And he said to them, “Pick** [lift] **me up** [imperative] **and throw** [pitch—the third time] **me** [another imperative] **into the sea; then the sea will become calm for you. For I know that this great tempest** [storm, whirlwind] **is because of me.”** [The first time that Jonah has wished to die in **Jonah**]

**13 Nevertheless the men rowed hard to return** [bring back] **to land** [these pagans are looking better than Jonah], **but they could not, for the sea continued to grow more tempestuous** [stormy] **against them.** [Have you ever had a problem that no matter how hard you worked, you just could not solve?]

**14 Therefore they cried out to the LORD and said, “We pray, O LORD** [Jehovah—they called upon the actual name of God, not just the generic word for god], **please do not let us perish for this man's life, and do not charge us with innocent blood** [life that is free from guilt]; **for You, O LORD, have done as it pleased You.”** **15 So they picked** [lifted] **up Jonah and threw** [pitched—the fourth time—once used of God pitching the storm, once used of the sailors pitching their cargo and twice used of Jonah being pitched] **him into the sea, and the sea ceased** [stood] **from its raging** [storming, indignation]. **16 Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly** [same phrase that was used to describe how they felt about the storm], **and offered** [killed] **a sacrifice to the LORD and took vows** [vows of appreciation for being spared]. [They are new believers. God worked in spite of Jonah's disobedience.]

### Jonah's Prayer and Deliverance (1:17-2:10)

**17 Now the LORD had prepared** [appointed, **ordained**, assigned—not the word for created, but the word for setting aside something that already existed for a special purpose—it is what we do to deacons and pastors when we ordain them] **a great fish** [the Hebrew is pronounced ‘dawg’] **to swallow** [engulf] **Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly** [inward parts] **of the fish three days and three nights.**



## Jonah 2 (Praying)

**1 Then** [Just because the word “Then” is used to start the verse does not mean that this is the exact order of events in Jonah. **J. Veron McGee: It is characteristic of the Hebrew language to give the full account of something and then to go back and emphasize that which is important.** This technique is used in **Genesis 1-3** as well. This leaves room for the option that Jonah may have prayed this prayer early or late in the three days.] **Jonah prayed to the LORD his God** [Jonah’s God] **from the fish’s belly** [The most important point I want to drive home about **Jonah 2** is Calvin Whaley and the fact that if you are a child of God, you have your Father’s **ear** and you can pray anywhere]. **2 And he said:**

**“I cried out to the LORD because of my affliction** [straits, distress, trouble], **And He answered me. “Out of the belly of Sheol** [the location the dead or the unseen] **I cried** [shouted], **And You heard my voice.**

**3 For You cast** [threw—not the same word for pitched as is used in **Jonah 1**; this word means to throw or to cast off—this word does not care about the state or final location of the thing being thrown off] **me into the deep** [Jonah acknowledges that God Himself did this, not the sailors], **Into the heart of the seas, And the floods** [underground streams] **surrounded** [enveloped, marched around] **me; All Your billows and Your waves passed over me.**

**4 Then I said, ‘I have been cast out** [driven away, tossed—a new word] **of Your sight; Yet I will look again toward Your holy temple.’** [**John Calvin: In the struggle of faith there are internal conflicts**]

**5 The waters** [figuratively used of danger/violence] **surrounded me, even to my soul;** [**John Calvin: The Hebrews say that to be pressed to the soul, is to be in danger of one’s life.**] **The deep** [deep places, abyss] **closed** [enveloped, marched around] **around me; Weeds were wrapped around my head.**

**6 I went down to the moorings** [base] **of the mountains; The earth with its bars closed behind me forever; Yet You have brought up** [caused to be brought up] **my life from the pit** [of Hell or destruction], [**John Wesley: In the assurance of faith, he speaks of the thing as already done.** Great faith prays as if something has already been accomplished. Jonah was still in the fish when he prayed this.] **O LORD, my God** [again Jonah reiterates that Jehovah is his God].

**7 “When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the LORD; And my prayer went up** [entered, came] **to You, Into Your holy temple.**

**8 “Those who regard** [to keep, or pay attention to] **worthless** [vain, empty] **idols** [literally, breath—something that has no substance or lasting value] **Forsake** [depart, leave, abandon, apostatize] **their own Mercy** [*chesed*—loving-kindness].

**9 But I will sacrifice** [each of the four parts of the book of **Jonah** contains a **sacrifice**] **to You With the voice of thanksgiving** [confession, praise]; **I will pay** [complete, make good, make whole (illustration of the Fatz owner)] **what I have vowed. Salvation** [deliverance] **is of the LORD.”**

**10 So the LORD spoke** [commanded] **to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.** [**Wikipedia: The story of descent (from Israel, to Tarshish, to the sea, to under the sea) becomes the story of ascent (from the belly of the fish, to land, to the city of Nineveh).**]

## Jonah 3 (Preaching)

### Jonah Preaches at Nineveh (1-4)

**1 Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time** [When I taught this series in September 2009, I saw on Facebook the morning that I taught on **Jonah 3** that Stacey Bandy said this of her strong-will children: **I am reminded at how much love God has for me when I am that willful**], **saying, 2 “Arise** [an imperative—the same word used in **Jonah 1:2**], **go** [an imperative—the same word used in **Jonah 1:2**] **to Nineveh, that great city, and preach** [an imperative meaning to call, cry, proclaim, summon, and invite—the same word used in **Jonah 1:2**] **to it the message** [proclamation] **that I tell you.” 3 So Jonah arose** [obedience] **and went** [obedience] **to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly** [**elohiym**] —one of the words used to describe God and common among the Jews to use *elohiym* to describe something that is so big that no other thing like it can compare to it except the bigness of God] **great city, a three-day journey** [walk] **in extent. 4 And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day’s walk. Then he cried out** [obedience] **and said, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown** [same word used to describe what happened to Sodom and Gomorrah in **Genesis 19:25**]!”

### The People of Nineveh Believe (5-10)

**5 So the people of Nineveh believed** [stood firm, trusted, were certain] **God, proclaimed** [same word for preached in **Jonah 3:2**] **a fast** [abstinence from food], **and put on sackcloth** [material used for bagging grain—the modern-day equivalent would be a burlap sack (the thing that you use in a sack race)], **from the greatest** [oldest] **to the least** [youngest] **of them** [every person in the book of **Jonah** repents at some point]. **6 Then word** [speech] **came** [reached] **to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne and laid aside** [literally, he caused someone to take away] **his robe** [symbol of his glory], **covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes. 7 And he caused it to be proclaimed and published** [said] **throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles** [greatness], **saying,**

**Let neither man nor beast** [any animal], **herd** [cattle] **nor flock** [sheep and goats], **taste anything; do not let them eat** [graze], **or drink water. 8 But let man and beast** [any animal] **be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily** [strongly, violently] **to God; yes, let every one turn** [repent, go the opposite way] **from his evil** [wicked, displeasing, injurious] **way** [direction, habit] **and from the violence** [wrong, cruelty, injustice] **that is in his hands. 9 Who can tell** [know, perceive] **if God will turn** [**repent**], go the opposite way] **and relent** [be sorry, have compassion], **and turn away** [repent, go the opposite way] **from His fierce** [burning] **anger** [nose], **so that we may not perish** [be lost or exterminated]? [The Ninevites repented without knowing if God would spare them (obedience without regard to results)]

**10 Then God saw** [looked after, observed, considered] **their works** [labor, undertaking], **that they turned** [repented, went the opposite way] **from their evil** [wicked, displeasing, injurious] **way** [direction, habit]; **and God relented** [was sorry, had compassion] **from the disaster** [injury, misery, calamity] **that He had said** [promised] **He would bring upon** [do to] **them, and He did not do it.** [**Jonah 3** illustrates that God uses prophecy not only to prove that He is all knowing, but also as a means to draw people to repentance. **Can God repent?** Yes (if we understand that repentance is turning from a prior decision)]

The book of **Jonah** could have ended at **Jonah 3** if the book had been about Nineveh and the Ninevites. However, the book is not about the great city of Nineveh or the Ninevites (or the fish). The book of **Jonah** is about Jonah. **J. Vernon McGee: The problem is no longer Nineveh—the problem now is Jonah.**

## Jonah 4 (Pouting)

### Jonah's Anger and God's Kindness

**1 But it displeased** [trembled, quivered] **Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry** [hot, scorched, burned—a funny foreshadowing (pun intended)]. **2 So he prayed to the LORD** [it is good that Jonah took his problems to God, but Jonah blamed God], **and said, “Ah, LORD, was not this what I said when I was still in my country?** [We did not know about this conversation] **Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish** [Jonah ran because he did not want the Ninevites to repent.]; **for I know that You are a gracious and merciful** [compassionate] **God, slow to anger** [long nosed] **and abundant in lovingkindness** [chesed], **One who relents** [shows sorrow, pity, and compassion] **from doing harm.** **3 Therefore now, O LORD, please take** [take in your hand, capture, seize] **my life from me, for it is better** [agreeable] **for me to die than to live!”** [The second time that Jonah has wished to die in **Jonah**]

**4 Then the LORD said, “Is it right for you to be angry?”** [David Guzik: God likes to ask us questions, because they reveal our heart. This could be phrased, “Are you happy you are angry?” If Dr. Phil were asking, he would say, “How’s that working for you?”]

**5 So Jonah went out of the city** [Jonah prayed that angry prayer to God while still in Nineveh. I hope none of the Ninevites heard him!] **and sat on the east side of the city.** [J. Vernon McGee: The east side of the city was up in the hill country, up at an elevation. This gave Jonah a view of the city.] **There he made himself a shelter** [a covering from the sun (Nineveh is located in modern-day northern Iraq—a very sunny place)] **and sat under it in the shade, till he might see** [observe, inspect] **what would become of the city.** [Jonah’s prophecy was that in 40 days Nineveh would be overthrown and it appears that Jonah was going to wait it out to see if it happened.] **6 And the LORD God prepared** [appointed, ordained, assigned] **a plant** [a plant or a gourd (the particular Hebrew word used causes most commentators to agree with Jamieson, Fausset, Brown: It grows from eight to ten feet high. Only one leaf grows on a branch, but that leaf being often more than a foot large, the collective leaves give good shelter from the heat. It grows rapidly, and fades as suddenly when injured.)—the verb form of this Hebrew word means ‘to vomit’ or ‘disgorge’ and the noun form is a ‘gourd’—a subtle reference in Hebrew connecting the great fish and the gourd] **and made it come** [rise] **up over Jonah, that it might be shade for his head to deliver** [rescue] **him from his misery** [What does the fact that God needs to provide Jonah with shade say about Jonah’s ability to provide for his own comfort? Jonah did not do a very effective job of providing for himself (and neither do we)]. **So Jonah was very grateful** [exceedingly happy and rejoicing—this is the **first** time we find Jonah happy, even though he should have been happy with God’s sparing the Ninevites] **for the plant.** **7 But as morning dawned the next day God prepared** [appointed, ordained, assigned] **a worm** [a grub worm—the verb form of this Hebrew word means ‘to swallow’ and the noun form is a ‘worm’—a subtle reference in Hebrew connecting the great fish and the worm], **and it so damaged** [attacked, damaged] **the plant that it withered** [dried up; God has used His creation to take Jonah under water, cover Jonah with a plant, and scorch Jonah. Never underestimate

God's ability to use anything to expose **sin**.] **8 And it happened, when the sun arose, that God prepared** [appointed, ordained, assigned] **a vehement** [harsh, hot, silent] **east** [God causes this wind to blow in Jonah's face—much like the sin of Nineveh came up before God's face in **Jonah 1:2**] **wind** [wind—the verb form of this Hebrew word means 'to smell odor' and the noun form is a 'wind'—subtle reference in Hebrew connecting the great fish and the wind]; **and the sun beat** [the same word used of the worm in **Jonah 4:7** meaning attacked, damaged] **on Jonah's head, so that he grew faint** [literally, wrapped himself up to prevent fainting]. **Then he wished** [begged] **death for himself** [The **third** time that Jonah has wished to die in **Jonah**], **and said, "It is better for me to die than to live."**

**9 Then God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?"** [Exactly as asked in **Jonah 4:4**, with the addition of one phrase]

**And he said, "It is right for me to be angry, even to death!"** [Jonah's last recorded words in **Jonah**]

**10 But the LORD said, "You have had pity** [had compassion] **on the plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow, which came up in a night and perished** [was exterminated] **in a night. 11 And should I not pity** [have compassion] **Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern** [distinguish] **between their right hand and their left** [God is most likely referring to children here—should not Jonah have pity of young children more than he has pity on a plant? We get our priorities mixed up too]—**and much livestock?** [**Why include the livestock?** Even if Jonah could argue that the plant was more significant than the Ninevites whom he hated, he could not argue that the plant was more significant than the livestock.]"

## Conclusion

**J. Vernon McGee: God is saying to a great many people today, "I want you to go and take the Word of God to those who are lost." And they say, "But I don't love them." God says, "I never asked you to love them; I asked you to go." I never find anywhere that God asked Jonah to go because he loved the Ninevites. He said, "Jonah, I want you to go because I love them. I love Ninevites. I want to save Ninevites. And I want you to take the message to them."**

**Why does Jonah end unfinished?** The book of **Jonah** is our story. We can relate to Jonah because we did not listen the first time. We rarely listen the second time. God has given us multiple chances and sometimes we get angry when things work out His way. The book of **Jonah** is not finished. We do not know how Jonah finishes his life. We do not know if he goes back in to Nineveh and continues preaching. We do not know if he dies on that hill on the east side of the city. We do not know how our lives are going to turn out—our stories are not finished.

Challenge: Obey and enjoy the ride (God knows what He is doing)

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. God can use anything to get our attention
2. Obedience is the very best way to show that we believe
3. Repent (it is OK)

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Allow God to use me
2. Obey when God reveals His will to me
3. Repent quickly when I am confronted with my sin

# The Prophets: The Day of Judgment

---

## Preview: Remember, Remember, the Fifth of November . . .

November 5, 1605 was a failed assassination attempt on King James I (the monarch the King James Bible was named for). There were a number of conspirators in the Gunpowder Plot—called so because they wanted to blow up Parliament (they had the gunpowder to pull it off). The conspirators were found out, tried, and executed. The British actually wrote it into their laws for the next 250 years that this night should be spent remembering how close the British came to losing their leadership (a call to remember).

## Introduction to the Prophets (adapted from Terry Brown's series on The Minor Prophets)

The Old Testament has four parts: the Law, the History, the Wisdom, and the Prophets. The Law is what God wanted the Israelites do to, the History is the record of what they did, the Wisdom shows the Israelites how to live the Law (Terry Brown says it puts, 'feet on the Law'), and the Prophets call the Israelites back to **remember** the Law (like the British remember the Gunpowder Plot).

To understand fully the prophets, you have to understand **Deuteronomy 28**. **Deuteronomy 28** is a chapter in the Law that describes (in detail) the outcomes for obedience and disobedience. It is part of those final series of sermons that Moses preached to the Israelites before Joshua took them into the Promised Land. Moses stood on the edge of the Promised Land and pleaded with them to obey God. Moses laid out what would happen if the Israelites did not obey (it was not a pretty picture). The prophets came 500-1,000 years later and remind the Israelites that God was serious about His promises.

When the prophets prophecy, they prophecy about immediate fulfillments and about future fulfillments (**waves** of fulfillments). It appears that many times the prophets had no idea of the future fulfillments; they just saw the immediate fulfillment. During these times of prophesying, the prophets wrestle with their emotions and with their obedience. Through this wrestling, God proves Himself real to them.

A typical structure for a prophetic book is a prophet seeing some sin (any lack of adherence to the Law) and then issuing a warning (usually conditional) relative to some set of consequences (the prophecy). The prophet sees the check engine light and pulls over to deliver the message so restoration can occur.

## Division of the Prophets

- Pre-exilic prophets to the Northern Kingdom: Hosea and Amos
- Pre-exilic prophets to the Southern Kingdom: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Micah, and Joel (proof that God loves the South more than He loves the North)
- Post-exilic prophets to the Southern Kingdom: Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi

Key thought: Give your **best** to God

## Introduction to Malachi

Malachi ('my messenger') was one of the last writing prophets before the 450 years of silence. He wrote about the joke that the priests were, the sin of God's people not giving God their best, and the potential future restoration and serious warning if something did not change (not a pleasant message to deliver).

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Malachi 1-4 (Author = Malachi)

### Malachi 1

**1 The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi.** [Please understand that the prophets did always not feel that their message was an easy one. They did not necessarily enjoy their message—to some of them; it was a heavy, heavy, burden. Imagine being tasked with speaking for God in order to bring about national repentance—that is a heavy task.]

#### Israel Beloved of God

**2 “I have loved you,” says the LORD.**

**“Yet you say, ‘In what way have You loved us?’**

**Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?”**

**Says the LORD.**

**“Yet Jacob I have loved;**

**3 But Esau I have hated,**

**And laid waste his mountains and his heritage**

**For the jackals of the wilderness.”**

**4 Even though Edom has said,**

**“We have been impoverished,**

**But we will return and build the desolate places,”**

**Thus says the LORD of hosts:**

**“They may build, but I will throw down;** [i.e., you will not **prosper**—this should get the Israelites’ attention]

**They shall be called the Territory of Wickedness,**

**And the people against whom the LORD will have indignation forever.**

**5 Your eyes shall see,**

**And you shall say,**

**‘The LORD is magnified beyond the border of Israel.’**

We now begin a long section describing the Israelites’ **sins** (**Malachi 1:6-3:18**).

#### Polluted Offerings

**6 “A son honors *his* father,**

**And a servant *his* master.**

**If then I am the Father,**

**Where *is* My honor?** [Sin: lack of honor]

**And if I *am* a Master,**

**Where *is* My reverence?** [Sin: lack of reverence]

**Says the LORD of hosts**

**To you priests who despise My name.**

**Yet you say, ‘In what way have we despised Your name?’**

**7 “You offer defiled food on My altar,** [Sin: offering **defiled** food. God had very specific rules in the Law about what could and what could not be offered and the priests were not adhering to those rules]

**But say,**

**‘In what way have we defiled You?’**

**By saying,**

**‘The table of the LORD is contemptible.’**

**8 And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice,**

**Is it not evil?**

**And when you offer the lame and sick,** [the blind and the lame and the sick are representative of Israel’s second best—Malachi is reminding them that the bar is far higher than blind, lame, and sick animals—and at the same time he is subtly telling them that they are blind, lame, and sick]

**Is it not evil?**

**Offer it then to your governor!**

**Would he be pleased with you?**

**Would he accept you favorably?”** [“Your government officials would not even accept this”]

**Says the LORD of hosts.**

**9 “But now entreat God’s favor,**

**That He may be gracious to us.**

**While this is being *done* by your hands,**

**Will He accept you favorably?”**

**Says the LORD of hosts.**

**10 “Who *is there* even among you who would shut the doors,**

**So that you would not kindle fire *on* My altar in vain?**

**I have no pleasure in you,”**

**Says the LORD of hosts,**

**“Nor will I accept an offering from your hands.**

**11 For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down,**

**My name *shall be* great among the Gentiles;**

**In every place incense *shall be* offered to My name,**

**And a pure offering;**

**For My name shall be great among the nations,”**

**Says the LORD of hosts.**

**12 “But you profane it,**

**In that you say,**

**‘The table of the LORD is defiled;**

**And its fruit, its food, *is* contemptible.’**

**13 You also say,**

**‘Oh, what a weariness!’**

**And you sneer at it,”** [Sin: griping and complaining about **serving** God (Have you ever had a waitress at a restaurant that complained about her job while he was doing it? It ruins the meal does it not?)]



Says the LORD of hosts.

“And you bring the stolen, the lame, and the sick;

Thus you bring an offering!

Should I accept this from your hand?”

Says the LORD.

14 “But cursed *be* the deceiver

Who has in his flock a male,

And takes a vow,

But sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished—

For I *am* a great King,”

Says the LORD of hosts,

“And My name *is to be feared among the nations*. [Summary of [Malachi](#) 1: God demands the best and the Israelites are not bringing it]

## Malachi 2

### Corrupt Priests

1 “And now, O priests, this commandment is for you. [Malachi turns his attention from the people to the [priests](#) (the ‘spiritual’ leaders)]

2 If you will not hear,

And if you will not take *it* to heart,

To give glory to My name,”

Says the LORD of hosts,

“I will send a curse upon you,

And I will curse your blessings.

Yes, I have cursed them already,

Because you do not take *it* to heart. [Sin: lack of seriousness and [weight](#) associated with serving God]

3 “Behold, I will rebuke your descendants

And spread refuse on your faces, [yes, that means what you think it means—it also would make the priests unclean and unfit to serve God]

The refuse of your solemn feasts;

And *one* will take you away with it.

4 Then you shall know that I have sent this commandment to you,

That My covenant with Levi may continue,”

Says the LORD of hosts.

5 “My covenant was with him, *one* of life and peace,

And I gave them to him *that he might fear Me*;

So he feared Me

And was reverent before My name.

6 The law of truth was in his mouth,

And injustice was not found on his lips.



He walked with Me in peace and equity,  
And turned many away from iniquity.

7 “For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge,  
And *people* should seek the law from his mouth;  
For he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.

8 But you have departed from the way;  
You have caused many to stumble at the law. [Sin: causing those you serve to **sin**]  
You have corrupted the covenant of Levi,”  
Says the LORD of hosts.

9 “Therefore I also have made you contemptible and base  
Before all the people,  
Because you have not kept My ways  
But have shown partiality in the law.” [Sin: applying the Law to some and not to others—not being consistent in the application of the Law (elsewhere this is called being a respecter of persons)]

### Treachery of Infidelity

10 Have we not all one Father?  
Has not one God created us?  
Why do we deal treacherously with one another  
By profaning the covenant of the fathers?

11 Judah has dealt treacherously,  
And an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem,  
For Judah has profaned  
The LORD’s holy *institution* which He loves:  
He has married the daughter of a foreign god. [Sin: either marrying strangers or idolatry]

12 May the LORD cut off from the tents of Jacob  
The man who does this, being awake and aware,  
Yet who brings an offering to the LORD of hosts!

13 And this is the second thing you do:  
You cover the altar of the LORD with tears,  
With weeping and crying;  
So He does not regard the offering anymore,  
Nor receive *it* with goodwill from your hands.

14 Yet you say, “For what reason?”  
Because the LORD has been witness  
Between you and the wife of your youth,  
With whom you have dealt treacherously;  
Yet she is your companion  
And your wife by covenant. [Sin: they were not treating their wives appropriately—many feel they were divorcing them haphazardly (because of the verses to come) and God is calling them back to the **covenant** they made. Aside: the best definition of marriage in the Bible: a covenant of companionship.]

**15 But did He not make *them* one,  
Having a remnant of the Spirit?  
And why one?  
He seeks godly offspring.  
Therefore take heed to your spirit,  
And let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth.**

**16 “For the LORD God of Israel says  
That He hates divorce,** [One of the reasons that God hates divorce is that God divorced Israel ([Jeremiah 3](#))—He has been through it and it was awful. He later brought Israel back and reengaged the relationship, but He hates divorce. He hates that reconciliation did not take place.]  
**For it covers one’s garment with violence,”  
Says the LORD of hosts.  
“Therefore take heed to your spirit,  
That you do not deal treacherously.”**

**17 You have wearied the LORD with your words;** [i.e., they wore out God]  
**Yet you say,  
“In what way have we wearied *Him*?”  
In that you say,  
“Everyone who does evil  
Is good in the sight of the LORD,  
And He delights in them,”** [Sin: calling evil good and good evil]  
**Or, “Where *is* the God of justice?”**

## Malachi 3

### The Coming Messenger

**1 “Behold, I send My messenger,  
And he will prepare the way before Me.  
And the Lord, whom you seek,  
Will suddenly come to His temple,  
Even the Messenger of the covenant,  
In whom you delight.  
Behold, He is coming,”  
Says the LORD of hosts.** [[Who is Malachi talking about?](#) John the Baptist or Jesus?]

**2 “But who can endure the day of His coming?  
And who can stand when He appears?  
For He *is* like a refiner’s fire  
And like launderers’ soap.**

**3 He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver;  
He will purify the sons of Levi,**

And purge them as gold and silver,  
That they may offer to the LORD

An offering in righteousness. [This person will make it right again in the end—foreshadowing to Revelation]

4 “Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem  
Will be pleasant to the LORD,  
As in the days of old,  
As in former years.

5 And I will come near you for judgment;  
I will be a swift witness

Against sorcerers, [Sin: sorcery]

Against adulterers, [Sin: adultery]

Against perjurers, [Sin: lying]

Against those who exploit wage earners and widows and orphans, [Sin: taking advantage of the vulnerable]

And against those who turn away an alien— [Sin: inhospitality]

Because they do not fear Me,”

Says the LORD of hosts.

6 “For I *am* the LORD, I do not change;  
Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.

7 Yet from the days of your fathers  
You have gone away from My ordinances  
And have not kept *them*.

Return to Me, and I will return to you,” [Here is the hope! In the midst of all of the sin, here is our real hope: return to God!]

Says the LORD of hosts.

“But you said,

‘In what way shall we return?’ [i.e., “How do we come back to you?”]

### Do Not Rob God

8 “Will a man rob God?

Yet you have robbed Me!

But you say,

‘In what way have we robbed You?’

In tithes and offerings.

9 You are cursed with a curse,

For you have robbed Me,

Even this whole nation.

10 Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, [Returning to the Lord involves returning to the Lord what is His. We cannot steal from God and expect blessing. Tithes (10% of all income) and offerings (additional giving) are what the Israelites were withholding and God called that robbing Him.]

That there may be food in My house,  
And try Me now in this,"  
Says the LORD of hosts,  
"If I will not open for you the windows of heaven  
And pour out for you *such* blessing  
That *there will not be room enough to receive it.*

11 "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes,  
So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground,  
Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,"  
Says the LORD of hosts;

12 "And all nations will call you blessed,  
For you will be a delightful land," [The only condition He has given them so far to return to God is to fix the **giving** system—to give God the best and the appropriate amount]  
Says the LORD of hosts.

### The People Complain Harshly

13 "Your words have been harsh against Me,"  
Says the LORD,  
"Yet you say,  
'What have we spoken against You?'

14 You have said,  
'It is useless to serve God;  
What profit *is it* that we have kept His ordinance,  
And that we have walked as mourners  
Before the LORD of hosts?

15 So now we call the proud blessed,  
For those who do wickedness are raised up;  
They even tempt God and go free.'" [Sin: the second time of calling evil good and good evil]

### A Book of Remembrance

16 Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another,  
And the LORD listened and heard them;  
So a book of remembrance was written before Him  
For those who fear the LORD  
And who meditate on His name.

17 "They shall be Mine," says the LORD of hosts,  
"On the day that I make them My jewels.  
And I will spare them  
As a man spares his own son who serves him."

18 Then you shall again discern  
Between the righteous and the wicked,

Between one who serves God  
And one who does not serve Him.

## Malachi 4

### The Great Day of God

**1** “For behold, the day is coming,  
Burning like an oven,  
And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble.  
And the day which is coming shall burn them up,”  
Says the LORD of hosts,  
“That will leave them neither root nor branch. [i.e., there will be nothing left]

**2** But to you who fear My name  
The Sun of Righteousness shall arise  
With healing in His wings;  
And you shall go out  
And grow fat like stall-fed calves.

**3** You shall trample the wicked,  
For they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet  
On the day that I do *this*,”  
Says the LORD of hosts.

**4** “Remember the Law of Moses, My servant,  
Which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel,  
*With the statutes and judgments.* [Remember **Deuteronomy 28**]

**5** Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet  
Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

**6** And he will turn  
The hearts of the fathers to the children,  
And the hearts of the children to their fathers,  
Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.” [After this, God stopped giving messages to prophets for about **450** years—until John the Baptist arrived and proclaimed that the Messiah was coming. John the Baptist was the bridge between the Old Testament and the New Testament.]

Challenge: Give God your best

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. God is patient
2. Anything less than our best service does not count in God’s eyes
3. There will come a time when it is too **late**

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Return to Him now since He will not change
2. Serve with a clean and grateful **heart**
3. Tell others (knowing that while we are in a period of hope for restoration, there will come a day when it will be too late for those that do not believe)

# The Essential 100

---

## A Bible overview plan for 2011-2012

The Essential 100 (E100) is a systematic approach that guides readers through the big picture of the Bible. It is a carefully selected list of short Bible passages—50 from the Old Testament and 50 from the New Testament. The passages are usually one to two chapters in length and can easily be read in 10 minutes or less.

One-page plan: Each testament is broken up into ten, five-week series. We will move from Old to New Testaments every five weeks. My goal is to teach three of the five lessons in every series.

The E100 in Sunday school: We will REAP (read, explain, apply, and personalize) one passage each week and finish a series every five weeks. Each lesson will include a key verse for memorization. At the end of two years, we will have covered the essential 100 passages in the Bible.

Additional information: To learn more about The E100 program and to obtain additional resources, visit [e100challenge.com](http://e100challenge.com). Our Sunday school website is [stuartheights.org/sundayschool](http://stuartheights.org/sundayschool).

## The Schedule: The Early Years of Jesus

This series is about Jesus' life prior to the start of His earthly ministry.

Date	Lesson	Key Verse(s)	Passage	Speaker
February 6	The Word became Flesh	John 1:14	John 1:1-18	Jim Fleming
February 13	Gabriel's Message	Luke 1:30-31	Luke 1:1-80	Terry Bolden
February 20	The Birth of Jesus	Luke 2:10-11	Luke 2:1-40	Jim Fleming
February 27	John the Baptist	Luke 3:15-16	Luke 3:1-20	Jim Fleming
March 6	Baptism and Temptation	Matthew 3:16-17	Matthew 3:13-4:17	Jim Fleming

## Sunday school class timeline

8:50: Breakfast ready (February 13: open, February 20: open, February 27: open—sign up to assist with breakfast at [stuartheights.org/sundayschool](http://stuartheights.org/sundayschool))

9:07: Announcements (let me know prior to a Sunday if you have an announcement)

9:10: Lesson

9:40: Prayer requests at each table

9:45: Dismiss

9:50: Room cleared

# The Early Years of Jesus: The Word became Flesh

---

## Preview: In the Beginning . . . Again

In Jesus' day, most people did not understand who He really was (**John 1:5, 10**). That is still true today. Many accept him as a good man, a great moral teacher, or even a unique model of team building and leadership. However, unless you also accept Him as God (**John 1:14**), it is the same thing as rejecting Him (**John 1:11**). God desires for us to repent and "believe" on Jesus (**John 1:12**). That is how we discover the incredible blessings God wants to give us in this life and in the next life (**John 1:16-17**).

Jesus is God in the **flesh** sent for our salvation.

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): John 1:1-18 (Author = John)

**1 In the beginning** [do these words sound familiar? **Genesis 1:1**] **was the Word** [capitalized and is *Logos* in the Greek (not Legos, *logos*)], **and the Word was with** [near] **God, and the Word was God.**

David Guzik (on John 1:1):

- **There is a Being known as the Word.**
- **This Being is God, because He is eternal (In the beginning).**
- **This Being is God, because He is plainly called God (the Word was God).**
- **At the same time, this Being does not encompass all that God is. God the Father is a distinct Person from the Word (the Word was with God).**

**2 He was in the beginning with God.** [Jesus was there, too. Jesus has seen it all. He participated in man's creation, watched man's fall, and is the remedy for man's sin. He is my savior and there is none like Him.] **3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made** [see **Hebrews 1:2** and **Colossians 1:16**]. **4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.** [David Guzik: It isn't that the Word "contains" life and light; He *is* life and light. Therefore, without Jesus, we are **dead** and in **darkness**. We are lost. Significantly, man has an inborn fear towards both death and darkness. Only in Christ can there be no fear—He is the light that conquers the darkness and He is the life that conquers death.] **5 And the light shines** [Linear present active indicative: the light keeps on giving light—and this light will never end!] **in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend** [means to put your hand on (the darkness could not put its hand on the Light) and additionally means to overcome—we see the first hints of, 'Love Wins'] **it.**

**6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 This man came for a witness** [*martureo* (originally meant to testify, but so many Christians died as a result of their testimony about their faith in Christ, that the meaning of the word changed in the first century from 'testify' to 'died because of what you testified about'), **to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. 8 He was not that Light** [almost implies that some people thought John was the Messiah], **but was sent to bear witness of that Light. 9 That was the true** [means to have the form **and** the substance (some things in

life look like the real thing but are not the real thing—Coke O (per Julie), Cake Boss cakes (mostly filled with rice krispies), etc.)) **Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.**

**10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.** [The

world did not know its Creator? How did we miss Him? We are flawed and fallen. Do not miss the fact that we did not know Him when He was at work creating the world and we did not know Him when He was at work saving the world. I gather from this that we are ignorant beyond our own imagination.] **11**

**He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him .** [Have you ever felt excluded from something

you should have been included on? How do you think Jesus felt? Jesus created the universe, gave life to humanity, and was rejected by His creation.] **12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the**

**right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name** [the **Gospel** in four words]: **13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God** [implies that it is not our work, but the work of God Himself that saves us].

**14 And the Word became flesh** [theologically, this is called the incarnation (the in-flesh-ment) and this resulted in God being susceptible to physical pain, abuse, and torture] **and dwelt** [an old word meaning to pitch your tent or tabernacle—in the Old Testament, the tabernacle was the physical resting place of the glory of God—in the New Testament, the body of Jesus Christ was the physical resting place of the glory of God (Jesus is the fleshing out of God)] **among us, and we beheld** [carefully studied] **His glory** [this was something that was not possible in the Old Testament (if you looked at God, you died—Moses looked at where God was and his face glowed)], **the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth** [What a present: getting what we do not deserve and knowing the truth].

**15 John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me** [we find out later in John that Jesus was born after John, so this obviously refers to Jesus’ eternal existence].”

**16 And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace** [each day, we get new grace to replace the grace of the prior day]. **17 For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.** [The first of many, many comparisons of the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament centered on the Law of Moses (commandments). The New Testament centered on the Law of Christ (**love**).] **18 No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him** [David Guzik: Jesus has declared the nature of the unseen God to **man**—He filled in the gaps of our ignorance by fleshing out God for us].

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. The Logos is the **Word** of God in human flesh.
2. The Logos is the **Son** of God with the glory of God in Him.
3. The Logos shows men **who** God is and **what** God is.

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. **Believe** in His name
2. Know: Logos = God = Life = Light = Jesus Christ



# The Early Years of Jesus: Gabriel's Message

---

## Preview: Greetings!

You may feel too old, like Elizabeth ([Luke 1:18](#)), or too insignificant, like Mary ([Luke 1:48](#)), to make a difference. However, God can do incredible things ([Luke 1:37](#)) through people who are faithful and dependent on him ([Luke 1:6, 13, 50](#)). Having faith does not mean you will understand exactly what God is doing in your life. Faith is simply believing that God has the power to do anything ([Luke 1:37](#)) and then committing yourself to his way, no matter what happens ([Luke 1:38](#)).

## Overview: The Gospel of Luke

Distinctions of the [Gospel of Luke](#)

1. Most descriptive of all the biblical writers (266 words not used anywhere else in New Testament)
2. More detailed and obscure facts than any other gospel (many here not told in other gospels)
3. Focus:
  - a. [Luke](#) stresses God working in humanity and specifically individual lives
  - b. [Luke](#) puts special emphasis on "salvation" (never mentioned in [Matthew](#) or [Mark](#), only once in [John](#))
  - c. [Luke](#) focuses on details of individuals
  - d. [Luke](#) stresses the Holy Spirit in and on individual lives
  - e. [Luke](#) details Jesus' suffering and death

Key thought: God uses persons of real faith, no matter what their [stage](#) of life.

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Luke 1 (Author = Luke)

**1** Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, **2** just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, **3** it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, **4** that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.

## The Birth Announcement of John (5-23)

**5** There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. **6** And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. **7** But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years. **8** So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, **9** according to the

custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. 10 And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense. 11 Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. 12 And when Zacharias saw *him*, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

**Zechariah's purpose:** To burn **incense**

David Guzik: According to the Law of Moses, incense was offered to God on the golden altar every morning and every evening (Exodus 30:7-8). By this time, there was an established ritual for the practice.

1. There were several lots cast to determine who did what at the morning sacrifice. The first lot determined who would cleanse the altar and prepare its fire; the second lot determined who would kill the morning sacrifice and sprinkle the altar, the golden candlestick, and the altar of incense. The third lot determined who would come and offer incense. This was the most privileged duty; those who received the first and second lots would repeat their duty at the evening sacrifice, but not with the third lot. To offer the incense would be a once in a lifetime opportunity.

2. Before dawn, hundreds of worshippers gathered at the temple. The morning sacrifice began when the incense priest walked toward the temple, through the outer courts, he struck a gong-like instrument known as the *Magrephah*. At this sound, the Levites assembled and got ready to lead the gathered people in songs of worship to God.

3. The other two priests chosen by lot that morning walked up to the temple on each side of the priest chosen to offer the incense. All three entered the holy place together. One priest set burning coals on the golden altar; the other priest arranged the incense so it was ready to go. Then those two priests left the temple, and the incense priest was left all alone in the holy place.

4. In front of him was the golden altar of incense; it was 18 inches square and 3 feet high. On that small table lay the burning coals, with little wisps of smoke rising up, ready for the incense. Behind the gold altar was a huge, thick curtain, and behind that curtain was the Holy of Holies, the Most Holy Place, where no man could enter, except the high priest, and that only on the Day of Atonement. As he faced the golden altar of incense, to his right would be the table of showbread, and to his left would be the golden lampstand, which provided the only light for the holy place.

#### **Zechariah's heart**

1. Righteous
2. **Obedient**
3. Humbled (speculative): Given Luke 1:6 and the heart of Zechariah, he knew this was a once in a lifetime opportunity. It was a great privilege and honor to have this appointment—many priests never would experience it (there were an estimated 18,000-22,000 qualified priests at this time in history in the temple service).

#### **Zechariah's experience**

In this dimly lit, quiet, and small enclosure, Gabriel appears and Zechariah “**was troubled**.” Personally, my clothes would have had to be burned afterwards. This is Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God ([Luke 1:19](#)). God’s creations glow from His very presence (remember Moses). What an awesome and terrifying interruption to Zechariah’s quiet and holy vision of what would happen. Gabriel announces the Messiah’s precursor; the promised Elijah of [Malachi 3-4](#). Moreover, guess what, “it will be your son Zechariah.” A great revival in the hearts of the nation of Israel will result from the work of Zechariah’s son.

**13 But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. 14 And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. 15 For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb. 16 And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. 17 He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, ‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,’ and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”**

**18 And Zacharias said to the angel, “How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years.”**

**19 And the angel answered and said to him, “I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings. 20 But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time.”**

### **Zechariah’s Response**

This righteous, obedient, humble, and God-fearing man says, “Who me? I and my wife are too old.” A lapse in his faith and judgment (this NEVER happens to us) and Gabriel makes him mute—which Zechariah does not appear to know that it will be temporary. He didn’t lose his faith at all, as he continued to trust and serve out his service to God ([Luke 1:23](#)). How often have you seen someone, “give up,” on God when he felt God dealt him a bad hand?

**21 And the people waited for Zacharias, and marveled that he lingered so long in the temple. 22 But when he came out, he could not speak to them; and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple, for he beckoned to them and remained speechless.**

**23 So it was, as soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house. 24 Now after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived; and she hid herself five months, saying, 25 “Thus the Lord has dealt with me, in the days when He looked on me, to take away my reproach among people.”**

### The Birth Announcement of Jesus (24-40)

Gabriel appears again in order to bring good news—this time of the Messiah's **birth**. My quick synopsis is, "Gabriel appeared and said, 'The Messiah is coming. Now, go visit your cousin.'" Odd connection, don't you think?

**26 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"**

**29 But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. 30 Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 33 And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."**

**34 Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?"**

**35 And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. 36 Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. 37 For with God nothing will be impossible."**

**38 Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.**

#### Mary was humble

When referring to herself, she used the term "**maidservant**" (literally: female slave) in [Luke 1:38, 48](#)

**39 Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, 40 and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth.**

#### Mary was obedient

Gabriel's command was given to go serve and care for Elizabeth (much older and possible carrying/birthing complications). Mary went "with haste" ([Luke 1:39](#)) and stayed three months ([Luke 1:56](#)). This shows the servant's heart! Gabriel (and of course God) knew her servant's heart, thus the command.

### Mary's stay with Elizabeth (41-56)

**41 And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. 42 Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said,**

**"Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! 43 But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. 45 Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord."**

How involved was God with the **details** of their lives?

1. John the Baptist was filled with the Spirit (**Luke 1:15, 41**) from **birth**
2. Elizabeth was filled with the Spirit (**Luke 1: 41**), recognized Mary carried the **Messiah**, encouraged her, and praised God
3. Mary was filled with the Spirit (and carrying the Lord Himself, **Luke 1:35, 44, 46-55**) and gives a beautiful **poetic** discourse of Messianic Old Testament scriptures that Jesus will fulfill

**46 And Mary said:**

**"My soul magnifies the Lord,**

**47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.**

**48 For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant;**

**For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.**

**49 For He who is mighty has done great things for me,**

**And holy is His name.**

**50 And His mercy is on those who fear Him**

**From generation to generation.**

**51 He has shown strength with His arm;**

**He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.**

**52 He has put down the mighty from their thrones,**

**And exalted the lowly.**

**53 He has filled the hungry with good things,**

**And the rich He has sent away empty.**

**54 He has helped His servant Israel,**

**In remembrance of His mercy,**

**55 As He spoke to our fathers,**

**To Abraham and to his seed forever."**

**56 And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her house.**

### **The Birth and Circumcision of John (57-80)**

In obedience to Gabriel's pronouncement, they call him **John**. One of the funniest verses in the Bible is **Luke 1:62**. Zechariah was mute, not deaf. Nine months of this—how frustrating! I love this though as this shows the human/real quality to Luke's writings. We do the same thing all the time. I have done this with someone who does not speak English. Zechariah is given his speech back, is filled with the Spirit, and prophecies.

57 Now Elizabeth's full time came for her to be delivered, and she brought forth a son. 58 When her neighbors and relatives heard how the Lord had shown great mercy to her, they rejoiced with her.

59 So it was, on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him by the name of his father, Zacharias. 60 His mother answered and said, "No; he shall be called John."

61 But they said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name." 62 So they made signs to his father—what he would have him called.

63 And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, "His name is John." So they all marveled. 64 Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue *loosed*, and he spoke, praising God. 65 Then fear came on all who dwelt around them; and all these sayings were discussed throughout all the hill country of Judea. 66 And all those who heard *them* kept *them* in their hearts, saying, "What kind of child will this be?" And the hand of the Lord was with him.

67 Now his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying:

68 " Blessed *is* the Lord God of Israel,  
For He has visited and redeemed His people,  
69 And has raised up a horn of salvation for us  
In the house of His servant David,  
70 As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets,  
Who *have been* since the world began,  
71 That we should be saved from our enemies  
And from the hand of all who hate us,  
72 To perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers  
And to remember His holy covenant,  
73 The oath which He swore to our father Abraham:  
74 To grant us that we,  
Being delivered from the hand of our enemies,  
Might serve Him without fear,  
75 In holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.  
76 " And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest;  
For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways,  
77 To give knowledge of salvation to His people  
By the remission of their sins,  
78 Through the tender mercy of our God,  
With which the Dayspring from on high has visited us;  
79 To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death,  
To guide our feet into the way of peace."

80 So the child grew and became strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel.

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. Take a look at whom God can use:
  - a. God used a couple who were too **old** (**Luke 1:18**)
  - b. God used a woman who was **unworthy** (**Luke 1:43**)
  - c. God used a woman who was **insignificant** (**Luke 1:48**)

Whatever excuse you prefer, it makes no difference to God. The better your excuse may seem, the greater the **glory** brought to God.

2. **Luke 1** is full of those who experienced the presence of God. What was their response?
  - a. Gabriel, the one, "who stands in the presence of God" (**Luke 1:19**) is constantly bringing good news, giving **glory** to God, and praising His name (compare **Daniel 9**)
  - b. Elizabeth, filled with the Spirit and entering the presence of the pre-born Messiah, gives **praises** to God and shares testimony of His goodness (**Luke 1:41-45**)
  - c. Mary, filled with the Spirit and carrying the pre-born Messiah, **praises** God, tells of His greatness, and gives Him glory (**Luke 1:46-55**)
  - d. Zachariah, filled with the Spirit, tells of the Messiah's coming and God uses him to prophecy regarding his own son, in turn bring the Lord **glory**

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Be **ready** and allow God to use you (**Luke 1:38**)
2. **Trust** Him (He knows what He is doing and is more than capable—**Luke 1:37**)
3. Tell others of His goodness, mercy, love, and greatness. Give Him all the **glory**. I know He deserves it!

### Testimonies

Bri Malloy

Zeke Arter

# The Early Years of Jesus: The Birth of Jesus

---

## Preview: Learning to count to one

God intentionally chose to work his greatest miracle through “invisible people” like two overwhelmed parents and some terrified shepherds. Throw in an old man and an old woman and you get the birth of the Messiah—the greatest one ever to live.

Key thought: Meeting Jesus changes **everything**

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Luke 2:1-40 (Author = Luke)

### Christ Born of Mary

**1 And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar** [EasyEnglish: Caesar was the title that Roman rulers took. They were in effect the kings of Rome.] **Augustus** [David Guzik: He was born with the name Octavian, named after his father. His grandmother was the sister of Julius Caesar, and being a talented young man, Octavian came to the attention of his great uncle. Julius Caesar came to adopt Octavian as his son, and he was made his official heir in 45. BC With a year Caesar was murdered, and Octavian joined with two others – Mark Antony and Lepidus in splitting the domination of Rome three ways. . . . Octavian and Antony soon pushed Lepidus out of the picture. Even though his sister married Antony, for thirteen years Octavian and Antony existed together as rivals, until 31. BC For a year, the huge armies of Octavian and Antony assembled and positioned themselves. Antony, with the help of Cleopatra, brought 500 warships, 100,000 foot soldiers, and 12,000 cavalry. Octavian answered with 400 warships, 80,000 infantry and 12,000 horsemen. But Octavian had the better strategy and the more mobile ships, and he defeated the combined forces of Antony and Queen Cleopatra of Egypt at the battle of Actium. Now Octavius was the sole ruler of the Roman world. He changed his name to Augustus and brought peace and prosperity to the region. He was the first **emperor** of Rome.] **that all the world** [the Roman world] **should be registered** [many translations say, ‘taxed,’ but the word is really the word for registered for a **census**—once the Caesar knew how many people there were, a tax would almost certainly follow]. **2 This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria.** [This verse has raised several questions to the validity and accuracy of the Scriptures as it appears to be an error. It is not. For a more thorough explanation of the timeline of Roman leaders, see Adam Clarke’s commentary.] **3 So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.** [David Guzik: It may well be that up to that point, there had never been a man with power over more lives than Caesar Augustus.]

**4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem** [house of bread; about six miles south of Jerusalem and **80** miles from Nazareth—it would have taken at least three or four hard days’ journey; a fulfillment of **Micah 5:2**—the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem], **because he was of the house and lineage of David,** **5 to be registered with Mary** [historians tell us that only the head of the house had to travel to participate in the census, so Mary did not have to go—perhaps she went because Joseph did not want to leave her so close to the birth], **his betrothed wife** [a strong form of a modern day **engagement**], **who was with child** [the Greek



is literally, 'big **wave**'—perhaps indicating the movement of Jesus in the womb]. **6 So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. 7 And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.** [Tradition says Jesus was born in a stable, but it is possible Jesus was born in the back of a poor home (where animals were kept). Either way, it was no entry for a king.]

### Glory in the Highest

**8 Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields** [shepherds kept their sheep in the field from April to November], **keeping watch** [a specific term for a **three**-hour period in the night—there were four watches and they would rotate responsibility (draw on the board)] **over their flock by night . 9 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them** [Jesus replaces darkness with **light**], **and they were greatly afraid** [*me gas phobeo*]. **10 Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. 11 For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.”**

**13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:**

**14 “Glory to God in the highest,  
And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”**

**15 So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, “Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.” 16 And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. 17 Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known** [a great description of what our job still is today—make it widely known—they were the first human evangelists of the good news of Jesus Christ] **the saying which was told them concerning this Child. 18 And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart** [meditated]. **20 Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.** [A natural response]

### Circumcision of Jesus

**21 And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child** [**Genesis 17:12**—Jewish boys were circumcised on the eighth day], **His name was called JESUS, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb** [**Matthew 1:21**].

### Jesus Presented in the Temple

**22 Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed** [**Leviticus 12** tells us this is 40 days after giving birth (because a woman was made unclean under the law because of the blood involved in childbirth)], **they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord 23 (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the LORD”), 24 and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, “A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”** [The rich brought a **lamb** and the poor brought birds. Joseph and Mary brought two birds, but they also brought the Lamb of God—they were rich and poor.]

### Simeon Sees God's Salvation

**25** And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name *was* Simeon, and this man *was* just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. **26** And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. **27** So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law [EasyEnglish: The parents had to pay money to the **Lord** for the first son when he was a month old. This was to buy back the boy [from God]. The fee was five shekels (Numbers 18:15-16)], **28** he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said:

**29** "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace,

According to Your word;

**30** For my eyes have seen Your salvation

**31** Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,

**32** A light to *bring* revelation to the Gentiles, [The Gentiles? Praise God for this line—this is us!]

And the glory of Your people Israel."

**33** And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. **34** Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this *Child* is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against **35** (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

### Anna Bears Witness to the Redeemer

**36** Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; **37** and this woman *was* a widow of about eighty-four years [this was an extreme old age for this time period—the average life expectancy was only about **thirty** years], *who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.* **38** And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

### The Family Returns to Nazareth

**39** So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their *own* city, Nazareth. **40** And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him. [This is before Jesus went into the temple to teach, so this was pre-12]

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. God **speaks** to average, everyday people
2. People respond when Jesus arrives
3. God will bring about His **plans**
4. Little **kids** can have a big impact

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Listen for the **voice** of God
2. Respond when you **hear** it
3. Give God the glory when He works
4. Look for **Jesus** in everything

# The Early Years of Jesus: John the Baptist

---

## Preview: The world's greatest referral

John the Baptist's assignment was to prepare the way for the Messiah (**Luke 3:4**). The main elements of his message were a call to repentance and a challenge to produce fruit. In the end, John devoted his life to the higher purpose of humbly pointing people to Jesus (**Luke 3:15-17**; **John 3:27-36**).

Key thought: Anyone can have an **impact** by pointing people to Jesus

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Luke 3:1-20 (Author = Luke)

### John the Baptist Prepares the Way

**1 Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar** [the **second** Roman emperor; **Wikipedia: Tiberius was the stepson of Augustus** [last week's Caesar], **great-uncle of Caligula, paternal uncle of Claudius, and great-great uncle of Nero**], **Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea** [the fifth Roman prefect of Judah and Samaria—and later the man that would judge Christ and allow His crucifixion], **Herod being tetrarch of Galilee** [not Herod the Great who had the Jewish boys put to death, but his son, Herod Antipas—the one who would ultimately be humanly responsible for John the Baptist's death; also not Herod Agrippa I (grandson of Herod the Great) who had James killed and Peter thrown in prison in **Acts 12**; also not Herod Agrippa II (mentioned in **Acts 25-26**)], **his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis** [Philip died five years after this story], **and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, 2 while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests** [Luke gives all of this detail to put the actors on the stage and to provide the date—most scholars feel it is 28 or 29 AD—making Jesus and John both around 30 years old], **the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness** [God spoke to Moses, Jacob, Elijah, etc., in the wilderness. The other gospels tell us that John wore camel's clothing (not popular then either), ate locusts, and lived alone. John was **weird**.].

John preaches before he ever says a word. His location, his clothes, his food, his lifestyle. He is preaching without saying a word. HOWEVER, HE DOES NOT STOP THERE. Many of us stop at lifestyle evangelism, but even if that method works, that is not what we are commanded to do. John the Baptist opens his mouth and he **refers** people to Jesus because Jesus is the only one worth being referred to.

**3 And he** [John] **went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission** [Luke was a what? A doctor. Remission is a medical term meaning a disease is relaxing—repentance brings about the relaxing of the impacts of sin] **of sins** [the repentance (changing of the mind) saved, not the baptism, but the baptism was new, so it was what was focused on], **4 as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah [Isaiah 40:3-5a] the prophet, saying:**

***"The voice of one crying in the wilderness:***

***'Prepare the way of the LORD;***

***Make His paths straight.*** [John's job was to **prepare** the way for the Messiah]

***5 Every valley shall be filled***

*And every mountain and hill brought low;  
The crooked places shall be made straight  
And the rough ways smooth;*

**6 And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”** [A neat play on words with ‘flesh’ and ‘see’ since that is what Jesus is—the in-flesh-ment of God that we can see]

### John Preaches to the People

**7 Then he said to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, “Brood of vipers! [Have you ever heard a sermon started this way? And these were people who were being baptized!] Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. 9 And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”** [John did not mince words or play around. He got directly to the point. He was talking to the religious and to those that thought that the faith of their **fathers** would be enough for them. Your eternal destiny is decided by **you**. John was telling them that they are not special and that God could replace them if He so desired. I do not think John’s message would be popular today either—go into a room of Americans and tell them that they are not special and that God could bless another nation like He has America if He so desired.]

**10 So the people asked him** [this is in the imperfect tense, meaning they asked repeatedly], **saying, “What shall we do then?” 11 He answered and said to them, “He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise.”** [Paraphrased from Dan Miller’s *Blue Like Jazz: The human struggle should bother us. Something is broken in the world and we are called to hold our hands against the open, bloody wound.* Do something. John was telling them to be **engaged**.]

**12 Then tax collectors** [Jewish tax collectors were especially hated by the Jews—they were literally assisting in the funding of the Roman governmental rule] **also came to be baptized, and said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?”** [As if **Luke 3: 11** did not apply to them!] **13 And he said to them, “Collect no more than what is appointed for you.”** [They would collect more than they were supposed to because the over and above was pure profit. John was telling them to be **honest** in their business.]

**14 Likewise the soldiers asked him, saying, “And what shall we do?” So he said to them, “Do not intimidate** [literally, double-shaking (like an earthquake)] **anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages.”** [The soldiers would have commoners do their work for them and they would (sometimes) be paid as if they were bounty hunters, so they would arrest more than they should. John tells them to be **content**. *Robertson’s New Testament Word Pictures: Might does not make right with Jesus.* Just because we are strong enough to do a thing, does not mean we should do it.]

**15 Now as the people were in expectation, and all reasoned in their hearts about John, whether he was the Christ or not** [*Robertson’s New Testament Word Pictures: John wrought no miracles and was not in David’s line and yet he moved people so mightily that they began to suspect that he himself was the Messiah*], **16 John answered** [they questioned in their hearts and John answered out loud], **saying to all, “I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I**

**am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire** [Holy Spirit I am good with, but fire?]. **17 His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire.**" [Again, no mincing of words John is letting them know that the Messiah (Jesus) is coming to set everything straight. He will separate you into two groups—the **true** and the **false**. John puts himself below Christ. John speaks the truth about **Christ** (and goes to heaven for it).]

**18 And with many other exhortations he preached to the people** [translation: he did a LOT of other stuff, but you get the idea]. **19 But Herod the tetrarch, being rebuked by him concerning Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, 20 also added this, above all, that he shut John up in prison.** [John speaks the truth about **Herod** (and goes to prison for it).]

### Luke 7:18-19, 22-23 (John's question)

**18 Then the disciples of John reported to him concerning all these things. 19 And John, calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to Jesus, saying, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"**

**22 Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them. 23 And blessed is he who is not offended** [Greek = scandalized (tripped up)] **because of Me."** [John was in prison in **Luke 7**.]

Erwin McManus (in *The Barbarian Way*): Jesus was saying to him, "John, I'm not coming through for you. I'm not getting you out of this prison. I'm not sparing your life. Yes, I have done all this and more for others, but the path I choose for you is different from theirs. You'll be blessed, John, if this does not cause you to fall away. There are no **bows**. John's end was martyrdom (see **Matthew 14:1-12**). John did not preach a health/wealth gospel and his life did not end up that way.

John helps to move us from the papyrus and ink word of the Old Testament to flesh and blood Word of the New Testament. John helps us to hear what God says and to see what God intended. John moves us from the word to the way (a movement that is created through the incarnation of Jesus). The word started something that eventually took on flesh and blood. This is the story of Jesus and this is the story that John refers and redirects us to. Tomorrow does not have to be a repeat of today. Jesus can change your tomorrows for His glory.

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. God uses **weird** people
2. Jesus is the One
3. Tomorrow can be **different**

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. God wants to use me **now**
2. My story is **unique**
3. I must be obedient now

## Extra

John's surface story is, 'live weird and Jesus will use you.' The sub-story, the sub-version is, 'be obedient to your calling (i.e., the will of God) and Jesus will use you.' So, what is the will of God for you?

Now, be careful, because these sub-versions are sometimes dangerous to you. However, the truth is the truth, so go for it!

### God's will requires:

1. Jesus to give Himself for us ([Galatians 1:3-5](#))
2. Jesus to pray for us ([Romans 8:26-27](#))

### God's will:

1. Saves ([John 1:12-13](#))
2. Allows God to hear you ([John 9:30-31](#))

### God's will is for you to:

1. Be baptized ([Luke 7:29-30](#))
2. Be called ([1 Corinthians 1:1](#))
3. Sacrifice yourself ([Romans 12:1-2](#))
4. Be obedient ([Ephesians 6:5-7](#))
5. Do good ([1 Peter 2:15-16](#))
6. Be giving ([2 Corinthians 8:4-5](#))
7. Pray and give thanks ([1 Thessalonians 5:17-18](#))
8. Abstain ([1 Thessalonians 4:3-4](#))
9. Suffer ([1 Peter 3:17-18; 4:19](#))
10. Complete the work ([Colossians 4:12-13](#))

# The Early Years of Jesus: Baptism and Temptation

---

## Preview:

John the Baptist baptized Jesus—not to wash away Jesus’ sin, but so that Jesus would better be able to identify with humanity. Immediately following His baptism, the devil tempted Jesus with a variety of temptations. Jesus did not sin during His temptation, but rather used Scripture to combat the devil.

Key thought: Jesus **identifies** with us through His baptism and His temptations

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Matthew 3:13-4:17 (Author = Matthew)

### John Baptizes Jesus (parallel passages of Mark 1:9-11, Luke 3:21-22, and John 1:29-33)

Jesus’ life is marked by being different and separate from those around Him. **Jamieson, Faussett, Brown:** as He rode into Jerusalem upon an ass, “on which no one has ever sat” (Luke 19:30), and lay in a sepulcher, “in which no one had yet been lain” (John 19:41), so in His baptism, too. He would be “separate from sinners.” Jesus was **different**.

**13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him.** [Baptism is not intended to wash away sin because Jesus had no sin. Some question the origin of water baptism, but **John 1:33** says that God told John the Baptist to start doing it—so John the Baptist start doing it. **Geneva Bible: Christ sanctified our baptism in himself.**] **14 And John tried to prevent** [in the imperfect sense, meaning he repeatedly did this] **Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?”** [I think we can relate to that, right? Baptizing God? No thanks. I would let God baptize me. However, if John had not protested, it would not have given Jesus an opportunity to explain Himself and His actions. **The Fourfold Gospel: It should be noted that this protest of John’s needed to be made, for it saved Jesus from being baptized without explanation, as if he were a sinner. Baptism without such explanation might have compromised our Lord’s claim as the sinless one.**]

**15 But Jesus answered and said to him, “Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.”** [The answer to, ‘Why did Jesus have to be baptized?’ is to fulfill righteousness. Both John and Jesus had prophecies to fulfill. But why was this important? **David Guzik: The purpose was for Jesus to completely identify Himself with sinful man. This is exactly what He did in His birth, His upbringing, and His death. So here, as John allowed Him to be, here is Jesus, standing again in the place of sinful man.** I was born. Jesus was born. I was reared. Jesus was reared. I was baptized. Jesus was baptized. I will die one day. Jesus died one day. These events help me to relate to Jesus and help Jesus relate to me. God is hard enough to figure out—Jesus helps with that, ‘figuring out.’] **Then he allowed Him.** [The Fourfold Gospel: John’s humility caused him to shrink from this duty, but did not make him willfully persist in declining it. Humility ceases to be a virtue when it keeps us from performing our allotted tasks. At some point, just do the work!]



**16 When He had been baptized** [In our church, it is customary to say, “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Buried with Christ in baptism. Raised to walk in newness of life.” That language comes from (1) **Matthew 28:19** and (2) **Romans 6:4**. We have no clue what John said when he was baptizing Jesus, though. He may not have said anything. I doubt he said, “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and in your name, and of the Holy Spirit. Buried with you in baptism. Raised to walk in newness of life.”], **Jesus came up immediately from the water** [quite clearly Jesus’ baptism was by immersion and was not by sprinkling; even the Scriptures say that we are ‘buried’ in baptism (**Colossians 2:12**; **Romans 6:3-4**)]; **and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw** [Matthew is not clear as to whether or not anyone else saw the Spirit. **John 1** records that John the Baptist saw it as well.] **the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him**. [The dove is a common symbol of the Holy Spirit in religious **art** and many view the dove in other places in Scripture as also representing the Holy Spirit.] **17 And suddenly a voice came from heaven** [**Barnes’ Notes: This voice, or sound, was repeated on the mount of transfiguration, Matthew 17:5; Luke 9:35-36; 2 Peter 1:17. It was also heard just before his death, and was then supposed by many to be thunder, John 12:28-30.**], **saying, “This is My beloved Son** [the Father states this is the Son], **in whom I am** [in the aorist tense, which means true all time periods—past, present, and future (the English language does not have an equivalent to the aorist tense, but it is very helpful in theology)] **well pleased.”**

**David Guzik: Jesus was baptized to be identified with sinful man, but He was also baptized to be identified to sinful man.** All three members of the **trinity** show up at one time to attest to the fact that Jesus is God. And, if the whole idea of God descending on God while God is talking is a little hard-to-get, that’s OK—welcome to the theology of the Trinity.

## Matthew 4

### Satan Tempts Jesus (parallel passages of Mark 1:12-13 and Luke 4:1-13)

**1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit** [remember that the Spirit led Him to the wilderness—God’s Spirit led Him, but not to tempt Him because God does not tempt us to sin (**James 1:13** clearly rebuts this). Now, Jesus has just finished identifying with man in His baptism and now He is going to identify with man with His temptation.] **into the wilderness** [**Coffman: Dummelow (J. R. Dummelow, One Volume Commentary (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1937), p. 632) saw in this wilderness temptation a contrast to the temptation of the first Adam. “The temptation of the first Adam took place in a garden . . . the temptation of the second Adam took place in a wilderness.” The fruits and flowers of Eden contrast with the wild beasts and the disorder of the howling wilderness. Thus, the victory of Christ was made more wonderful.** The devil essentially raises the bar of difficulty on Jesus and Jesus still passes.] **to be tempted** [tested, tried, tempted; **New Testament Word Pictures: The evil sense comes from its use for an evil purpose. Coffman: Temptation is in itself no sin. . . . It is not temptation to do wrong that constitutes sin, but YIELDING to that temptation.** The bottom line is that the Spirit meant it for **good** and the devil meant it for **bad**.] **by the devil** [the slanderer, the accuser—if you want to be like the devil, slander and accuse people]. **2 And when He had fasted** [abstaining from food and/or drink—a spiritual discipline that you should practice] **forty days and forty nights** [Moses had a 40-day fast



(Exodus 34:28-29) as did Elijah (1 Kings 19:7-9)—interesting that both showed up at Jesus' transfiguration in Matthew 17, too. **The Fourfold Gospel: Those who share Christ's sufferings shall also share his glorification (Romans 8:17).**], afterward He was hungry [hungry, not thirsty—implies this was a food fast—also lets us know that He was a human being (we share a need for food with Him)]. **3 Now** [when Jesus was tired and hungry—the devil will sometimes come when you are physically at your weakest] **when** [the certainty of temptation is not an, 'if,' but a, 'when'] **the tempter came to Him** [whether this was a physical manifestation or a ghostly manifestation, or a mental temptation, is not important (because the Scripture does not say)—a good rule of thumb is that if the Scripture does not address it, it is not as important as we think], **he said, "If** [first 'if'] **You are the Son of God** [the devil questions whether this is the Son—despite the fact that God the Father has just declared this to be true], **command** [literally, 'speak'—but that is all that the Word has to do to create—just like Genesis 1 (it's interesting to note that the Word (Jesus) was the one that spoke those stones into existence)] **that these stones become bread** [The lust of the **flesh**. **Barnes' Notes: He had just been declared to be the Son of God, (Matthew 3:17) and here was an opportunity to show that he was really so.** The devil is asking the Creator (Jesus) to create something that the Creator already is (Jesus is the Bread of Life). The devil gives stones (no nutritional value). Jesus gives the bread (much nutritional value) of life.]."

**4 But He answered** [answered, not argued] **and said, "It is written** [Jesus responds with Scripture. He is in a fight, so He picks up a sword.], **'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God** [Notice the complexity of this statement: The Word of God is talking about the word of God. The Word says the word comes from the mouth of God—but only Jesus has the literal mouth of God. Jesus quotes **Deuteronomy 8:3—Barnes' Notes: In that place the discourse is respecting manna. Moses says that the Lord humbled the people, and fed them with manna, an unusual kind of food, that they might learn that man did not live by bread only, but that there were other things to support life.** Jesus was not like the Israelites in their failure—He passes the test by using Scripture for His answer. **The Fourfold Gospel: God can support our lives independent of our body (Matthew 6:25; John 6:47-58; Acts 17:28).**]."

**5 Then the devil took Him** [Barnes' Notes: *conducted Jesus, or accompanied him; but not that this was done against the will of Jesus*] **up into the holy city** [a name for Jerusalem: **The Fourfold Gospel: The inscription on Jewish coins was, "Jerusalem the Holy."** Arabs today call it, "el Kuds," "the Holy."], **set Him on the pinnacle of the temple** [The lust of the **eyes**], **6 and said to Him, "If** [second 'if'] **You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written** [the devil uses that phrase too]:

**'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and,** [The People's New Testament: The enemy, like a false adviser, quotes from **Psalm 91:11** to justify his request, but he garbled the Scripture, leaving out **"to guard you in all your ways,"** which follows the first clause. The promise is limited to those who walk in the way appointed to them. The devil **misquotes** scripture.]

**'In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'"** [Psalm 91:11-12. It might shock you to know that the devil has the entire Bible memorized—he does not believe it all, but he knows it all. **The Fourfold Gospel: Satan's abuse of Scripture did not discourage Christ's use of it.**]

**7 Jesus said** [said, not argued] **to him, “It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt** [literally, to test, but here used as, ‘experiment, set traps for’] **the LORD your God.”** [Deuteronomy 6:16]

**8 Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.** [The **pride** of life] **9 And he** [the devil] **said to Him** [Jesus], **“All these things I will give You** [The Fourfold Gospel: It was a large offer in the sight of Satan, but a small one in the sight of him who made all the worlds. . . . Note also that this was the only temptation wherein Satan evinced any show of generosity. He is slow to give anything, and most of us sell out to him for **nothing.**] **if** [third ‘if’] **You will fall down and worship me.”** [The devil offers kingdoms through kneeling (remember **John 8:44**, too—this may just have been a lie). Jesus ushers in His kingdom through His bleeding. Jesus was required to die to save us. The devil was offering Jesus a **shortcut.**]

The Fourfold Gospel: Satan and God each seek the worship of man, but from very different motives. God is holiness and goodness, and we are invited to worship him that we may thereby be induced to grow like him. But Satan seeks worship for vanity's sake. How vast the vanity which would give so great a reward for one act of worship!

David Guzik: This is a revealing insight into Satan's heart; worship and recognition are far more precious to him than the possession of the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

**10 Then Jesus said** [said, not argued] **to him, “Away with you** [The Fourfold Gospel: When he tempted him in a somewhat similar matter, Jesus called Simon Peter by this name (**Matthew 16:23**), but he laid a different command upon each of them. To Satan he spoke as an enemy, saying, **“Away with you.”** He ordered Satan from his presence, for he had no proper place there. To Peter he spoke as to a presumptuous disciple, saying, **“Get behind Me.”** The disciple is a follower of his master, and his proper place is in the rear.], **Satan** [Jesus calls the devil by name]! **For it is written** [I love the consistency of Christ], **‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.’** [Deuteronomy 6:13]

**11 Then the devil left Him** [Jesus won! Jesus is God. God is love. Love won that day. It is still winning today. It will win tomorrow. Love always **wins.**], **and behold, angels came and ministered** [Greek = *diakoneo*, meaning to serve as a waiter (and in the imperfect tense, so they did this repeatedly)] **to Him.**

Now, Jesus and the devil could have had a Hollywood-sized epic fight, but they did not. They had a war of words. The time for the devil's demise is still in the future, and the devil still had a role to play in the God's redemptive story—so he was allowed to continue being as he is. His day will come, though. His day will come. It is good for us to remember that Jesus could have banished the devil with a miracle, but Jesus was giving us an example to follow.

### Jesus Begins His Galilean Ministry

The People's New Testament: A long period lapses between the temptation and the next event recorded. Matthew does not try to follow the order of events, and he now passes over more than a

year [because Matthew was not an eyewitness with Jesus during this time]. This year had been actively employed. The intervening events are, (1) the return of Jesus from the wilderness to Bethabara, where the first disciples are called (John 1:15-37); (2) the return to Galilee and the miracle at Cana (John 2:1-11); (3) the first passover of the Lord's ministry in Jerusalem and the temple cleansed (John 2:14-25); (4) interview with Nicodemus (John 3:1-21); (5) ministry in Judea (John 4:3); (6) leaves for Galilee, passes through Samaria, conversation at Sychar (John 4:4-42); (7) heals nobleman's son (John 4:46-54); (8) a period of retirement in Galilee, John imprisoned (Matthew 4:12); (9) attends feast in Jerusalem, miracle at pool of Bethesda (John 5); (10) returns to Galilee, April A. D. 28. We thus see that an interval of more than a year elapsed between the temptation and the imprisonment of John.

**12 Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee. 13 And leaving Nazareth** [Jesus' hometown], **He came and dwelt in Capernaum** [If you look at a map, this statement looks strange because Nazareth is in Galilee. However, Galilee has two parts—Lower Galilee and Upper Galilee—Jesus was leaving Lower Galilee and heading to Upper Galilee.], **which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, 14 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:**

**15 "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,  
By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan,  
Galilee of the Gentiles:**

**16 The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light,  
And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death  
Light has dawned."** [Isaiah 8:21-9:2. Again, we see Him fulfilling prophecy]

**17 From that time Jesus began to preach** [publically proclaim] **and to say, "Repent** [an imperative meaning to change your **mind**], **for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."** [John Wesley: Repentance which John taught still was, and ever will be, the necessary preparation for that inward kingdom]

The Fourfold Gospel: When the voice of his messenger, John, was silenced, the King became his own herald.

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. Jesus was **submissive**
2. Jesus is God
3. The devil tempts (he takes advantage, he comes after a high point, and he uses normal things)
4. Scripture is the **answer** to the devil's temptations

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Follow Jesus' **example** (in baptism and in temptation)
2. Know Scripture well enough to **answer**

# The Essential 100

---

## A Bible overview plan for 2011-2012

The Essential 100 (E100) is a systematic approach that guides readers through the big picture of the Bible. It is a carefully selected list of short Bible passages—50 from the Old Testament and 50 from the New Testament. The passages are usually one to two chapters in length and can easily be read in 10 minutes or less.

One-page plan: Each testament is broken up into ten, five-week series. We will move from Old to New Testaments every five weeks. My goal is to teach three of the five lessons in every series.

The E100 in Sunday school: We will REAP (read, explain, apply, and personalize) one passage each week and finish a series every five weeks. Each lesson will include a key verse for memorization. At the end of two years, we will have covered the essential 100 passages in the Bible.

Additional information: To learn more about The E100 program and to obtain additional resources, visit [e100challenge.com](http://e100challenge.com). Our Sunday school website is [stuartheights.org/sundayschool](http://stuartheights.org/sundayschool).

## The Schedule: The Teachings of Jesus

This series is about Jesus' teaching ministry

Date	Lesson	Key Verse(s)	Passage	Speaker
April 17	Sermon on the Mount (1/2)	Matthew 5:14-16	Matthew 5:1-6:4	Jim Fleming
April 24	No Sunday school: Easter at Coolidge			
May 1	Sermon on the Mount (2/2)	Matthew 6:33	Matthew 6:5-7:29	Jim Fleming
May 8	The Kingdom of Heaven	Matthew 13:45-46	Matthew 13	David Barber
May 15	The Good Samaritan	Luke 10:36-37	Luke 10:25-37	Barry Cole
May 22	Lost and Found	Luke 15:10	Luke 15	Jim Fleming

## Sunday school class timeline

8:50: Breakfast is ready

9:07: Teaching begins

9:40: Prayer requests at each table begin

9:45: Tables removed from the green carpet and padded chairs stacked in 7s against the wall

9:50: All class members are out of the room and headed to the sanctuary to worship

# The Teachings of Jesus: Sermon on the Mount (1/2)

---

## Review: The Essential 100

This is our second five-week series in the New Testament. So far, we have looked at The Early Years of Jesus. Now, we shift to The Teachings of Jesus. In the next series, we will look at The Miracles of Jesus and finally (in September and October) we will look at The Final Days of Jesus.

Jesus came to restore a relationship between God and man that was created in [Genesis 1](#) and ruined in [Genesis 3](#). When we listen to Jesus' teachings, remember that He came to restore relationships to their proper place.

Jesus had a wide and popular teaching ministry. People flocked to hear Him speak. He, however, did what many preachers do—He recycled. If you read His sermons, you will see bits and pieces of His sermons overlapping in other sermons. Today's passage (The Sermon on the Mount) in [Matthew 5-7](#), has a similar passage in [Luke 6](#) (The Sermon on the Plain). There are many similarities, but they were different sermons. Many theologians believe that the Sermon on the Mount was Jesus' standard sermon. The sermon recorded in [Matthew 5-7](#) can easily be preached in 15 minutes.

## Preview: Clarifying Happiness

For the sake of time, we are going to break up the Sermon on the Mount into two weeks (today, and the week after EAC). In reality, we could spend months looking at [Matthew 5-7](#).

There are three major parts to today's text: (1) the Beatitudes ([Matthew 5:1-12](#)—how to have a happy life), (2) Salt, Light, and Setup ([Matthew 5:13-20](#)—clarifying our purpose), and (3) Intentionalizing ([Matthew 5:21-6:4](#)—clarifying Scripture's intent). This first half of Jesus' message describes what life can be like, what we should be doing, and what God really meant.

As we read today's text, you will notice that Jesus lays out for us an impossible path for reconciling ourselves with God—because we cannot do this on our own. You will be challenged to solidify your interpretational view of Scripture. You will be forced to decide whether or not Jesus really meant what He said or if He just wants us to do better. This decision will influence the way you live. If you view Jesus' words as hyperbole/exaggeration for effect, you will conclude that He just wants us to do better. If you view Jesus' words as literal, you will conclude that the gap between what He expects and what we do is impossible to bridge on our own. I will let you guess which way I am going to go.

Key thought: Jesus challenges us to be his agents in the world. It is up to us. He does not have a plan B.

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Matthew 5:1-6:4 (Author = Matthew)

### Beatitudes

The beatitudes get their name from the Latin word for blessed (the word that each of the beatitudes start with)—is *beati*.

It is critical to remember that the Jews of Jesus' day were looking for their Messiah. When Jesus showed up and preached the Sermon on the Mount, that was not the message they wanted to hear. The Jews wanted to hear about a real kingdom that would usher in political change to overthrow the Roman rule. They were not expecting a message of love and a sermon on living a life that starts with being poor.

If you walked up to the average person on the street and told them to live according to the beatitudes, they would laugh at you. A great aspiration for Christians is to both have and to be developing these attitudes and behaviors. We will never master them all—these will take the rest of our natural lives.

To start each beatitude, Jesus gives a promise—“**Blessed**.” The best translation of *blessed* is **happy**. **Matthew 5:3-12** gives us a picture of a happy life. Happiness is not the goal; it is the result. Jesus turns the popular concept of happiness on its head by showing that happiness does not consist in what we have, but in what we have done and whom we have done it for. **A. T. Robertson: It is a pity that we have not kept the word “happy” to the high and holy plane where Jesus placed it.**

Jesus does not command us to be happy, but shows us the way (through a life lived for Him).

**1 And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain** [in **Luke 6**, Jesus is on a plain], **and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. 2 Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:**

**3 “Blessed are the poor** [those so poor they are reduced to begging; the word used of Lazarus in **Luke 16:20**] **in spirit** [*pneuma*], **For theirs is** [present tense—many of the other beatitudes promise things to come, but this promise is now] **the kingdom of heaven.**

What does it mean to be poor in spirit? **John Wesley: Being deeply sensible of their . . . helplessness.** Understanding my own helplessness helps me to understand everyone else's helplessness. We are all in the same sinking ship. **Matthew Henry: To value others and undervalue ourselves in comparison of them.** When I value others, I will let God do whatever He wants with my life to reach and invest in them.

**4 Blessed are those who mourn** [present tense, implying these people are currently undergoing this], **For they shall be** [future tense—present mourning is not always met with present comfort] **comforted** [*parakaleo*; to call to one's side for exhortation, comfort, instruction, to encourage and strengthen.

**5 Blessed are the meek**, [*praus*; translated 'gentle' in its three other usages in the New Testament (**Matthew 11:29**; **21:5**; **1 Peter 3:4**)] **For they shall** [future tense—future result] **inherit the earth.**

Meekness is strength controlled (focused) by the Holy Spirit. Even a gift out of control is dangerous. Remember when David Barber taught the lesson last June on meekness? He taught us that meekness was strength under control by breaking a concrete block with his bare hands. Medicine taken in the proper dosage can be helpful, but an overdose may kill; a domesticated horse is useful but an undomesticated one is destructive; and a gentle breeze cools and soothes, but a tornado kills.

**6 Blessed are those who hunger** [hunger, need, crave, seek with eager desire] **and thirst** [to suffer from thirst, to painfully feel their want of something, eager longing] **for righteousness** [the condition

acceptable to God—the way man is supposed to be: integrity, virtue, purity, correctly thinking and correctly acting], **For they shall be filled** [fed, filled, satisfied—the root word refers to fattening cattle].

People who hunger and thirst for food and water are people who are hurting, lacking, and empty. God's design is not for us to hurt. God's design is not for us to lack. God's design is not for us to be empty. There is no mention of hunger or thirst in the Garden of Eden before The Fall. God's design is for us to experience joy and fullness. Jesus came to reconcile us to God so we could have that fullness again.

**7 Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain** [experience] **mercy** [if you want to obtain it, show it].

**8 Blessed are the pure** [clean—used physically (taking a bath), ethically (doing the right thing), and Levitically (able to fulfill the Mosaic Law)] **in heart** [center of life], **For they shall see God.**

This person thinks pure thoughts. **What is pure?** Is 90% pure? Is 99% pure? Is 99.99% pure? Rat poison is 99.99 regular food and 0.001% poison.

**Titus 1:15: To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled.** Your heart will interpret how you perceive **reality**. A corrupt heart sees corruption. A pure/clean heart sees purity. A pure heart sees God.

**James 1:27: Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.** Purity is active—it is not avoiding life to stay clean, it is engaging life in a clean way.

**9 Blessed are the peacemakers** [people who **make** peace], **For they shall be called** [called, named, branded—this is the only beatitude where the outcome is labeling or branding] **the sons of God** [part of the family of God].

Peacemaking is working for peace. Peacemaking in **Matthew 5:9** is reconciling man to man. Peacemakers act. Peacemakers get involved. Peacemakers recognize with Donald Miller in *Blue Like Jazz*, that, **"Something was broken in the world and we were supposed to hold our palms against the wound."** Peacemaking is messy. Peacemaking can get ugly. Peacemaking is personal because it involves people. Peacemaking is caring enough about humanity to stop sowing discord and start sowing peace.

**10 Blessed are those who are persecuted** [made to run or flee, to drive away, to pursue in a hostile manner, to harass, to trouble] **for righteousness' sake** [the condition acceptable to God—the way man is supposed to be: integrity, virtue, purity, correctly thinking and correctly acting], **For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.** **11 "Blessed are you when they revile** [upbraid, the root word means to shame] **and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil** [literally, speech that causes pain] **against you falsely** [lying deliberately to deceive] **for My sake** [account, cause]. **12 Rejoice** [an imperative meaning to be glad, to be happy, to thrive] **and be exceedingly glad** [literally, **leap** much], **for great** [large] **is your reward** [wages, payment] **in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.**

The theme of the beatitudes (for me) is one of **active**, current engagement that results in a present happiness and future **hope**. God wants to use us to make a difference today that will last for an eternity.



Now we shift to the second portion of today's text: Salt, Light, and Setup

### Believers Are Salt and Light

**13 “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor** [literally, a flatness due to lack of flavor because of a focus on foolishness—think of a bad comedian], **how shall it be seasoned? It is then good** [strong, has power] **for nothing** [nothing, no one] **but to be thrown** [to throw or let go of a thing without caring where it falls] **out** [outside of the doors] **and trampled underfoot by men.**

**14 “You are** [David Guzik: Jesus never challenges us to *become* salt or light. He simply says that we *are*—and we are either fulfilling or failing that responsibility.] **the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden** [concealed]. **15 Nor do they light a lamp** [not a candle] **and put it under a basket** [literally, bushel—2.3 gallon dry-measure holding device], **but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light so** [in this manner—publically] **shine before men, that they may see your good** [beautiful, handsome, excellent, choice, surpassing, precious, useful, suitable, commendable, admirable] **works** [business, employment, acts, deeds] **and glorify** [to cause the dignity and worth of some person or thing to become manifest and acknowledged] **your Father in heaven.**

**What do salt and light have in common?** Both have to be engaged in a larger work to be meaningful. They both make other things better. They do not exist for themselves. They do not exist to make themselves better (no one eats salt and no one stares at light). **The Fourfold Gospel: Men do not praise the street lamps which protect them from robbery and assault, but they praise the municipal administration which furnishes the lamps.**

### Setup

**17 “Do not think that I came to destroy** [dissolve, disunite, or loosen] **the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill** [Scripture is a fabric and Jesus says He did not come to loosen the threads, but to make them fit better; our understanding of the Old Testament is incomplete without Jesus; Jesus will not break the Law, but He will challenge the interpretations of that day]. **18 For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot** [*iota*—the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet: ך] **or one tittle** [The Fourfold Gospel: We distinguish the letter “c” from the letter “e” by the tittle inside of the latter] **will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. 19 Whoever therefore breaks** [loosens] **one of the least of these** [smaller] **commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least** [small] **in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them** [Robertson's New Testament Note: Jesus puts practice before teaching], **he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds** [larger in quality and in quantity] **the righteousness of the scribes** [*grammateus*—those very familiar with the Scriptures] **and Pharisees** [a group that focused on external, not internal good works], **you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.**

Jesus now transitions to specific Old Testament passages. He examines the intent behind the Law. We tend to have very static views of Scripture—in that, we think that it is not moving. However, the Scriptures are dynamic, not static. They have varying levels of meaning (the thing that is stated, the thing that is behind the thing, and the thing that only God can illuminate). **David Guzik: In this section. . . this isn't Jesus against Moses; it is Jesus against false and superficial interpretations of Moses.**



## Intentionalizing

### Murder

**21 “You have heard** [from the people who taught the Scriptures] **that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder** [Exodus 20:3], **and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment** [the commentary on Exodus 20:3].’ **22 But** [can also be translated as, “Moreover” (meaning, in addition to), and “And”—the ‘but’ implies that Jesus is doing away with the Law. ‘Moreover’ implies that He is clarifying the Law and stating it with the focus on the intent of the Law and not the letter of the Law.] **I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause** [without purpose] **shall be in danger of the judgment** [this is **internal** criticism; judgment by the local city court (lowest level)]. **And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca** [empty, senseless-headed one—a criticism of the **intellect**!]’ **shall be in danger of the council** [judgment by the Jewish Supreme Court—the Sanhedrin (the second level)]. **But whoever says, ‘You fool** [foolish, godless—a criticism of a person’s **heart** and/or character (in effect, judging)]!’ **shall be in danger of hell fire** [eternal damnation (worst level)]. **23 Therefore** [because of what was just stated—Jesus is giving one real-life example in **Matthew 5:23-26** of being wrong and wronging and how to fix it] **if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled** [a compound Greek word meaning, ‘through changing of the mind’] **to your brother, and then come and offer your gift** [my horizontal relationships can impede my vertical relationship]. **25 Agree with** [be of a peaceable spirit and wish well; **Robertson’s New Testament Word Pictures: Compromise is better than prison where no principle is involved, but only personal interest**] **your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him** [on the way to the judge], **lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. 26 Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny** [less than half a cent; quick reconciliation lends itself toward less judgment].

### Adultery

**27 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery** [Exodus 20:14; having sex with anyone other than your spouse].’ **28 But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust** [with passion] **for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart** [Don’t let the clarity of this statement fool you—if you lust, it is the same as adultery]. **29 If your right eye causes you to sin** [is a stumbling block, a snare, or a **trap**], **pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell** [**The Fourfold Gospel: it is better to lose the dearest thing in life than to lose one’s self**]. **30 And if your right hand causes you to sin** [is a stumbling block, a snare, or a trap], **cut it off and cast it from you** [**Robertson’s New Testament Word Pictures: Modern surgery finely illustrates the teaching of Jesus . . . the appendix . . . if left diseased, will destroy the whole body. Cut . . . out in time and the life will be saved**]; **for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.** [Whether Jesus is using hyperbole or not, He is serious about removing stumbling blocks. **David Guzik: Jesus simply stresses the point that one must be willing to sacrifice to be obedient. . . . it is more profitable for . . . part our life to “die” rather than to condemn our whole life. . . . Many are unwilling to do . . . and that is why . . . they never get beyond a vague wish to be better.**]

## Marriage

**31 “Furthermore it has been said, ‘Whoever divorces** [sends away, dismisses—not the same word in **1 Corinthians 7**] **his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce** [i.e., make it formal—don’t let there be any doubt].’ **32 But I say to you that whoever divorces** [sends away, dismisses] **his wife for any reason** [word] **except sexual immorality** [*porneia*: adultery, fornication, homosexuality] **causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced** [sends away, dismisses] **commits adultery.**

## Oaths

**33 “Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely** [the root word is perjury], **but shall perform** [deliver on, pay off] **your oaths** [the root word is fences (boundaries define promises)] **to the Lord** [~**Numbers 30:2**].’ **34 But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne; 35 nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.**

## Haters

**38 “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth** [**Exodus 21:24**—this was intended to be a deterrent to crime because the punishment was so great, but the scribes said it legitimized revenge, so it became associated with revenge].’ **39 But I tell you not to resist an evil** [hardship, bad, evil, annoyances] **person. But whoever slaps** [with the palm of the hand] **you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also** [it was culturally insulting to slap someone then (this is not describing a beating, physical torture, or the government’s role in responding to evil—this refers to a cultural **insult**)]. **40 If anyone wants to sue** [‘sue’ is too restrictive—this word can mean anything from, ‘want really bad,’ to, ‘take you to court’] **you and take away your tunic** [undergarment], **let him have your cloak** [outer garment] **also** [the next example is legal **injustice**]. **41 And whoever compels you** [presses you into public service—directed squarely at the Roman military] **to go one mile, go with him two** [the last example is of governmental **oppression**]. **42 Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.** [Jesus is building in us a pattern of not being offended]

## Love

**43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love** [*agape*] **your neighbor** [**Leviticus 19:18**] **and hate** [hate, pursue with hatred, detest] **your enemy** [the hateful, hostile, hating, and opposing person].’ **44 But I say to you, love** [*agape*] **your enemies, bless** [praise, celebrate, bless with prayers] **those who curse you, do good** [beautifully, finely, excellently, so that there is no room for blame] **to those who hate** [hate, pursue with hatred, detest] **you, and pray for those who spitefully use** [to insult, to treat abusively, use spitefully, to revile, to accuse falsely in court, to threaten] **you and persecute** [chase you down in a hostile manner, drive you away] **you, 45 that you may be** [begin to be, appear to be] **sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just** [righteous] **and on the unjust** [unrighteous]. **46 For if you love** [*agape*] **those who love** [*agape*] **you, what reward** [wages] **have you?** [Christianity is more than morality] **Do not even the tax collectors** [despised in this culture for their corruption] **do the same? 47 And if you greet** [salute, welcome warmly] **your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? 48 Therefore you shall be perfect** [complete, grown up], **just as your Father in heaven is perfect.**

Feeling up to the challenge? I did not think so. **David Guzik: We see that in this section Jesus was not primarily seeking to show what God requires of the Christian in his daily life. True, Jesus has revealed God's ultimate standard, and we must take it to heart. But His primary intent was to say, "If you want to be righteous by the law, you must keep the whole law, internal and external—that is, you must be perfect!"**

## Matthew 6

### Deeds

**1 "Take heed** [be attentive, pay attention] **that you do not do your charitable deeds** [literally, give your money to the poor] **before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. 2 Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have** [*apoche*—the idea is that they just got a receipt (like a read receipt from an email—instantaneous)] **their reward** [the offering scene from Flywheel]. **3 But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.**

So, not only is it important to be righteous internally and externally, we have to keep from presenting a false image of righteousness for ourselves. I hope you see that we are not up to this challenge—but Jesus is.

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. Internal righteousness is required
2. External righteousness is required
3. No self-exalting images of righteousness are allowed

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Recognize that I cannot live this perfectly
2. Recognize that Jesus can
3. Let **Jesus**

# The Teachings of Jesus: Sermon on the Mount (2/2)

---

## Review

Jesus came to restore a relationship between God and man that was created in [Genesis 1](#) and ruined in [Genesis 3](#). When we listen to Jesus' teachings, remember that He came to restore relationships to their proper place.

Many theologians believe that the Sermon on the Mount was Jesus' standard sermon. The sermon recorded in [Matthew 5-7](#) can easily be preached in 15 minutes (implying that what we have is probably not the entire text). For the sake of time, we split the Sermon on the Mount into two weeks (two weeks ago and today). In reality, we could spend months looking at [Matthew 5-7](#). In last week's text, Jesus' message described what life can be like, what we should be doing, and what God really meant.

## Preview: To Do or Not to Do, That is the Question

In this week's text, Jesus lays out the consequences of getting our lives out of order. We tend to focus on our needs and ourselves and whether Jesus is talking about prayer, fasting, giving, or any other subject, Jesus says we are to do all things with our Heavenly Father in mind.

This week's text can be divided up into four parts: doing good ([Matthew 6:5-18](#)), material things ([Matthew 6:19-34](#)), judgment ([Matthew 7:1-6](#)), and choices ([Matthew 7:7-29](#)). A good way to further study this text is to note the questions (19) and the imperatives in this sermon.

Key thought: Jesus lays out how life should be lived and gives us a **choice**.

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Matthew 6:5-7:29 (Author = Matthew)

### The Model Prayer

**5** "And when [not if, but when] you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites [actors, pretenders]. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men [David Guzik: There were two main places where a Jew in Jesus' day might pray. . . . at the synagogue at the time of public prayer, or on the street at the appointed times of prayer (9 am, noon, and 3 pm)]. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward [they got their read receipt]. **6** But you, when [not if, but when] you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. **7** And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions [to stammer and repeat things over and over—not meaning what you say] as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words [we have all heard people on autopilot when they pray; Geneva Study Bible: Long prayers are not condemned, but vain, needless, and superstitious ones].

**8** "Therefore do not be like them [David Guzik: When we mouth words towards God . . . we use God merely as a tool to impress others.]. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him [Adam Clarke: Prayer is not designed to **inform** God. Coffman: A God who needs to be told

**what men need could certainly not help if told!]. 9 In this manner, therefore, pray** [notice the **plural** pronouns—this is not a prayer that can be prayed individually]:

**Our Father in heaven,**

**Hallowed** [separated, distinct—the verb form of the word **holy**] **be** [imperative] **Your name.**

**10 Your kingdom come** [imperative].

**Your will be done** [imperative]

**On earth as *it is* in heaven.**

**11 Give us** [imperative] **this day our daily bread.**

**12 And forgive us** [imperative] **our debts** [legal debts, not sins],

**As we forgive our debtors.**

**13 And do not lead us into temptation,**

**But deliver us** [imperative] **from the evil one** [Some of your translations say, ‘evil,’ some say, ‘evil one,’ making it very difficult to determine whether this is the Devil or a man or evil in general. The truth is that we do not know. Perhaps Jesus was being purposefully vague to cover all three scenarios.].

**For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen** [It is short (70 words long), to-the-point (takes 20 seconds to pray), and passionate (six imperatives for God to do something)].

Stop and pray for our community and those affected by the storms.

**Trevin Wax’s Providence Prayer (adapted from the Heidelberg Catechism)**

**Faithful Father, we praise you for your almighty and ever-present power. We trust in the power of your hand, which upholds heaven and earth and all creatures. We trust in the goodness of your rule over leaf and blade, rain and drought, fruitful and lean years, food and drink, health and sickness, prosperity and poverty—knowing that all things come to us not by chance but from your fatherly hand. Help us to be patient when things go against us, thankful when things go well, and confident for the future, knowing that nothing will separate us from your love.**

**14 “For if you forgive men their trespasses** [literally, ‘falling to the side,’ indicating a lapse in judgment or a **slip**-up], **your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their trespasses** [same word as above], **neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.** [Scary and direct]

**Fasting to Be Seen Only by God**

**16 “Moreover, when** [not if, but when] **you fast** [fasting is a conscious abstaining from food for the purpose of prayer], **do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad** [sad and gloomy (read: Eeyore)] **countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward** [they got their read receipt]. **17 But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18 so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly** [this is the third time this phrase, ‘**reward you openly**,’ has been used in the Sermon on the Mount].

**David Guzik: You can do a wonderful thing for the wrong motive and have it count for nothing before God; Christianity is a matter of the heart, not just outward works.**

### Lay Up Treasures in Heaven

**19 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth** [literally, do not treasure treasures on earth], **where moth and rust** [literally, eating (because rust appears to ‘eat away’ at things)] **destroy and where thieves break in** [literally, dig through] **and steal** [David Guzik: The issue isn't that earthly treasures are intrinsically bad; but they are no ultimate value either]; **20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.** [What you **invest** in is what you care about]

### The Lamp of the Body

**22 “The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good** [single, simple (healthy) in a physical sense], **your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eye is bad** [sick], **your whole body will be full of darkness** [i.e., healthy eyes will see straight, but unhealthy/diseased eyes will not see straight]. **If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!**

### You Cannot Serve God and Riches

**24 “No one can serve two masters** [the best verse in the Bible against polygamy]; **for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal** [line up face to face] **to the one and despise** [when comparing the emotion to] **the other. You cannot serve God and mammon** [an Aramaic word used to personify **money** (i.e., make it something that can be served)].

### Do Not Worry

**25 “Therefore I say to you, do not worry** [be anxious, care] **about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 Which of you by worrying** [being anxious, caring] **can add one cubit to his stature?**

**28 “So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil** [get tired from work] **nor spin; 29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?**

**31 “Therefore do not worry** [a different tense for the verb, this one means growing or becoming anxious or caring too much], **saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek** [Gentiles were not viewed highly by Jesus’ listeners]. **For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things** [David Ivarson: God already has a **list**]. **33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.** [How many lives would be happier if we would just obey **Matthew 6:34?**]

Adam Clarke: Many suppose that the law of Moses is abolished, merely because it is *too strict*, and *impossible to be observed*; and that the Gospel was brought in to *liberate* us from *its obligations*; but . . . nothing can be found so exceedingly *strict* and *holy* as this sermon.

## Matthew 7

### Do Not Judge

**1 “Judge not** [a **habit** of pre-separating, pre-distinguishing, pre-discriminating], **that you be not judged** [David Guzik: Jesus is speaking against being *judgmental*, that is, judging motives and the inner man, which only God can know]. **2 For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you** [How much sugar do you like in your sweet tea?]. **3 And** [to Jesus gives an example of improper judging] **why do you look at** [gaze at] **the speck** [twig, straw] **in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank** [beam, joist, rafter] **in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck** [twig, straw] **from your eye’; and look, a plank** [beam, joist, rafter] **is in your own eye? 5 Hypocrite! First remove the plank** [beam, joist, rafter] **from your own eye, and then you will see clearly** [look through] **to remove the speck** [twig, straw] **from your brother’s eye.** [Jesus’ way of saying, “People in glass houses shouldn’t throw stones”]

**6 “Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls** [literal pearls or figurative proverbs (words of great value)] **before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.** [Do not spend time focused on things with no possible return]

### Keep Asking, Seeking, Knocking

**7 “Ask** [ask, beg, call for, crave, desire, require], **and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 If you then, being evil** [I love how Jesus slips in little truths about the reality of our awfulness], **know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! 12 Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets** [The Old Testament is summed up by this simple statement: if you want something, **do** it.].

### The Narrow Way

**13 “Enter by the narrow** [strait, not straight] **gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.** [Francis Chan: The New **Middle** Road]

### You Will Know Them by Their Fruits

**15 “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous** [ravenous, rapacious (excessively grasping for prey—people who are passionate about killing things)] **wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits.**

David Guzik: We guard ourselves against false prophets by taking heed to their fruits.

1. We should pay attention to the *manner* of living a teacher shows.
2. We should pay attention to the *content* of their teaching.
3. We should pay attention to the *effect* of their teaching.



**Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17 Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot** [does not have the power, resources, or ability to] **bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit** [Jesus says that we can see the results of the type of trees that we are. **What type of tree is *Jim*?**]. **19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Therefore by their fruits you will know** [know, recognize] **them.**

### I Never Knew You

**21 “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’** [If you look at a life and do not see a relationship with God, the life is empty] **23 And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you** [not, “I knew you and forgot you”—these deceivers were never believers]; **depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’** [A scary thought: to have worked for a Jesus you did not know. Also, do not miss the bold claim that Jesus makes that He will be doing the judging in heaven.]

### Build on the Rock

**24 “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.**

**26 “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man** [Robertson’s New Testament Word Pictures: Hearing sermons is a dangerous business if one does not put them into practice] **who built his house on the sand: 27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”**

Everything in these two scenarios is the same except for the **obedience**. **David Guzik: In Jesus’ illustration of the two houses, each house looked the same from the outside. The real foundation of our life is usually hidden, and is only proven in the storm.** Both my obedience and my lack of obedience have repercussions. **Geneva Study Bible: True godliness rests only upon Christ, and therefore always remains invincible.**

**28 And so it was, when Jesus** [the Word] **had ended these sayings** [*logos*], **that the people were astonished** [struck with amazement, astonished, amazed; because He turned everything on its head] **at His teaching, 29 for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes** [the scribes taught by only quoting the rabbis and never injecting authority—because they had none to inject].

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. God likes actively working Christians
2. Jesus did not ignore the material (or our interactions with it)
3. Choices must be made

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Do good
2. Interact appropriately with the material
3. Choose **Jesus**



# The Teachings of Jesus: The Kingdom of Heaven

---

## Preview: D-Day for Sin

By comparing the Kingdom of Heaven to yeast, hidden treasure, a mustard seed, or a net, Jesus painted a picture of a seemingly insignificant thing that would have an overwhelming impact. That is how it is when we decide to follow Jesus—a seemingly small step changes everything about our lives, both now and for eternity. Jesus challenged his hearers to, “**understand with their hearts**” (**Matthew 13:15**), to allow his word to affect their attitudes, motivations and actions.

Key thought: Following Jesus changes everything about our lives—forever (Truth divides)

## Why did Jesus teach in parables?

### 1. Jesus was a master teacher

- Parables were memorable and stayed with people
- A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning

### 2. To allow for hidden meaning

- Parables were only for those with spiritual understanding
- Parables extended Jesus’ ministry. The enemies of Jesus were always waiting for Him to say something so they might accuse and persecute Him (**Luke 11:53-54**). By speaking in parables, Jesus was making it very hard for them to use His words against Him. He could hardly be arrested for telling homely stories!

### 3. Jesus tells us why He used parables

- **Matthew 13:10-13: 10 And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?” 11 He answered and said to them, “Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. 12 For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. 13 Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.**
- To fulfill prophesy. **Matthew 13:34-35: All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: “I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world.”** (Referring to **Psalms 78:1-4**)
- Why Jesus was sent. **Luke 4:43: But He said to them, “I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent.”**

## The Stuff in Between the Parables

1. Why, "Kingdom of Heaven," and not, "Kingdom of God? The only place, "Kingdom of Heaven," is used is in the [Gospel of Matthew](#).
  - **Matthew, writing to specifically Jewish readers, inserted "heaven" for "God" so as not to offend the Jewish sensibilities regarding uttering the name of God or the term that describes Him. This is probably correct, but it leaves us with no explanation for the 5 times Matthew failed to make the switch, or for why he uses "God" in over 50 other instances.**  
[bibletopics.com/biblestudy/157.htm](http://bibletopics.com/biblestudy/157.htm).
  - Therefore, **"Kingdom of Heaven" = "Kingdom of God"**
2. Two key points for me:
  - Truth divides (those that have salvation and those that do not have salvation). The Kingdom of Heaven is the result of the Gospel (Truth). There will be a separation of those that believe and those that do not believe. See [gci.org/bible/matthew13](http://gci.org/bible/matthew13)
  - The Kingdom of Heaven is now. Jesus is describing things the way things are for the believer prior to the return of Christ.

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Matthew 13 (Author = Matthew)

### The Parable of the Sower

**1 On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. 2 And great multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.**

**3 Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. 5 Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. 6 But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. 7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. 8 But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9 He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"**

### The Purpose of Parables

**10 And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?"**

**11 He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. 12 For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. 13 Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. 14 And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says:**

*'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand,  
And seeing you will see and not perceive;  
15 For the hearts of this people have grown dull.  
Their ears are hard of hearing,  
And their eyes they have closed,  
Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears,  
Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn,  
So that I should heal them.'*

**16** But blessed *are* your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; **17** for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous *men* desired to see what you see, and did not see *it*, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear *it*.

### The Parable of the Sower Explained

**18** "Therefore hear the parable of the sower: **19** When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand *it*, then the wicked *one* comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. **20** But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; **21** yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. **22** Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. **23** But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands *it*, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

### The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares

**24** Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; **25** but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. **26** But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. **27** So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' **28** He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' **29** But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. **30** Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn."'"

### The Parable of the Mustard Seed

**31** Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, **32** which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."

### The Parable of the Leaven

**33** Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened."

### Prophecy and the Parables

**34** All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, **35** that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying:

*"I will open My mouth in parables;*

*I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world."*

### The Parable of the Tares Explained

**36** Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field."

**37** He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. **38** The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked *one*. **39** The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. **40** Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. **41** The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, **42** and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. **43** Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

### The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

**44** "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

### The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price

**45** "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, **46** who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

### The Parable of the Dragnet

**47** "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, **48** which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. **49** So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, **50** and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

**51** Jesus said to them, "Have you understood all these things?"

They said to Him, "Yes, Lord."

**52** Then He said to them, "Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure *things* new and old."

### Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

**53** Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, that He departed from there. **54** When He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were

astonished and said, “Where did this *Man* get this wisdom and *these* mighty works? **55** Is this not the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? **56** And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this *Man* get all these things?” **57** So they were offended at Him.

But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house.” **58** Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

### Parable Content (Messages)

Parable	Basic Meaning
<b>The Parable of the Sower</b> <b>3-9, 18-23</b>	<p><b>Rocky Soil.</b> When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away (<b>20-21</b>). Some people like the Gospel as a novelty. Then they get bored with it, and when it does not solve their problems, they quit. They may have been looking for a quick fix. Therefore, when we share the Gospel, some of the people who respond will eventually fall away. Do not be surprised; that is just the way some people are.</p> <p><b>Thorns.</b> All sorts of people can be distracted by the worries of this world, and some drop out for that reason. They are more worried about this world than they are about their position in eternity.</p> <p><b>Good Soil.</b> Jesus wants us to be this kind of person. Seeds do not have a choice as to what kind of soil they fall on, but we have a choice as to what kind of soil we will be for the seed. We can choose to respond to the Gospel. When trials come, we can choose to stick with the Gospel, or to fall away.</p>
<b>The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares</b> <b>24-30, 36-43</b>	<p>Jesus explains the parable for us in <b>37-43</b>. The good seeds are the disciples, spread by Jesus throughout the world. The weeds are bad people, spread by the Devil. The bad people are mixed in with the good, and this is what the kingdom of God is like. God allows this; it is part of His plan. Jesus is describing a world in which Satan is active—the age we live in today. The kingdom of God is growing now, and God is waiting to see which plants will bear fruit. Do not be too hasty, He tells his servants. Wait and see.</p>
<b>The Parable of the Mustard Seed</b> <b>31-32</b>	<p>Jesus is not describing a kingdom that arrives in a blaze of glory—He is describing a kingdom that begins very small. This is not what the Jews expected, but this is the kingdom that Jesus said was near. A small thing can make a massive difference.</p>
<b>The Parable of the Leaven</b> <b>33</b>	<p>Very similar to the Parable of the Mustard Seed, leaven shows how the impact of the smallest thing, belief in the redemptive act of Christ, changes EVERYTHING.</p>

<b>The Parable of the Hidden Treasure</b> <b>44</b>	Jesus is the main character. He is the one who sees hidden treasure in his people (the field), and gives everything He has to purchase the prize. The value may not be evident right now, but it is there.
<b>Parable of Pearl of Great Price</b> <b>45-46</b>	Same message as The Parable of the Hidden Treasure. The message is not, we should do everything we can to find the lost. The message is that Jesus has already done everything He could to find us.
<b>Parable of the Dragnet</b> <b>47-50</b>	The Kingdom of God is presented to both good and bad people. The message is given to both. They live together and are given a chance to change and grow. Eventually the time comes when judgment is made and God brings the good (the saved) to Himself.

### Apply (What is the point?)

Jesus taught in parables for many reasons:

1. Communicates masterfully
2. Kept Jesus from being the target of Jewish leadership until it was time
3. Fulfilled prophecy

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Understand that the message of the parables is that the Gospel divides—by definition, that is what Truth does since if something is true, something else must be false
2. Know that ultimately, we are responsible for communicating the message, not the results

Parables are stories about people. Our lives are a living parable and they are a masterful way to communicate the good news of the Gospel.

# The Teachings of Jesus: The Good Samaritan

---

## Preview: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

This event occurred right after Jesus picked the 70. [Luke 10:25-29, 36-37](#) is the historical account and [Luke 10:30-35](#) is the make-believe story Jesus creates to make His point.

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Luke 10:25-37 (Author = Luke)

**25 And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” 26 He said to him, “What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?”** [Jesus turns the tables on the lawyer]

**27 So he answered and said, “‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,’ and ‘your neighbor as yourself.’”**

**28 And He said to him, “You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.”**

**29 But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”**

**30 Then Jesus answered and said: “A certain *man* went down** [Jerusalem was 3,300 feet above sea level and Jericho was at sea level] **from Jerusalem to Jericho** [referred to as the, “way of blood,” because of the dangers], **and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead. 31 Now by chance a certain priest** [similar to a preacher for us] **came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 Likewise a Levite** [similar to a church leader—think deacon, Sunday school teacher, etc.], **when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. 33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. 34 So he went to *him* and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave *them* to the innkeeper, and said to him, ‘Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.’ 36 So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?”**

**37 And he said, “He who showed mercy on him.” Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”**

Main Characters: **Jesus** and the **lawyer**

## Do this and you will live

The Lawyer, the **expert**, “**tested him**.” The Greek word is, *ekpeirazo*, “to put to the test, try, tempt.” He was testing Jesus, the **novice**, to see how well He answered a theological question.

The first question is, “**What shall I** [a Jew] **do to inherit eternal life**,” or, “What is important for a Jew to be saved?” The answer is found in [Luke 10:27](#). The Lawyer answered with the Law: [Deuteronomy 6:5](#): **You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength** and

**Leviticus 19:18:** You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I *am* the LORD.

Jesus says, “**You have answered rightly.**” The roles are reversed, Jesus becomes the expert, and the lawyer becomes the novice. Then the second question, “**And who is my neighbor?**”

**Who Is My Neighbor?** Typical lawyer, he needs a definition of “**neighbor**.” The Jewish interpreted, “**neighbor**,” as, “someone who was near and of the same religious community” (fellow Jews). They often excluded everyone else.

**The Message in the Bottle:** Jesus, the expert **storyteller**, uses the lawyer’s experience and awareness to make a hypothetical situation a teaching moment.

Who was Jesus’ audience? **other Jews**

**The Robbers:** who stripped him of his clothing, wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead.

**Priests and Levites:** Both parties had a **religious** problem. According to the Law, they could not help.

**Leviticus 21:11:** Nor shall he go near any dead body, nor defile himself for his father or his mother. On the other hand, the Law states: **Exodus 23:4:** If you meet your enemy’s ox or his donkey going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again. **Proverbs 25:21:** If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; And if he is thirsty, give him water to drink.

The priest just kept walking and, “**passed on by**.” The Levite actually stopped, “**came and looked**.”

### The Samaritan

**Luke 10:33:** Had **compassion**;

**Luke 10:34:** took **care** of him

**Luke 10:35:** I will **repay** you

What do we get out of this story? Love, **love**, and **love**. It may not be convenient and it may be expensive, but it is all about love.

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. Anything that isn’t true is untrue
2. Anything that isn’t love is hate

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

**Micah 6:8:** No, the Lord has told us what is good. What he requires of us is this: to do what is just, to show constant love, and to live in humble fellowship with our God. (GNB)

... walking without pride before your God. (BBE)

Nothing else I can say or do could add anything to **Micah 6:8**.



# The Teachings of Jesus: Lost and Found

---

## Preview: Sinners Welcome

Today is week five of a five-week series on the teachings of Jesus. It is fitting that we finish teachings of Jesus with parables because He used them so much. In the parables we read about in [Luke 15](#) (the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost/prodigal son), Jesus is illustrating the fact that God takes the initiative in His relationships with us and God models true and better relationships for us by doing so. The proper place for us is with Him and He will pursue us to that end.

**David Guzik: Each scene illustrates a different aspect of God's work. The Son seeks the lost as the Good Shepherd, the Holy Spirit seeks the lost with searching illumination, and the Father in seeks the lost with open arms upon return.**

Key thought: God cares about **restoring** relationships

There is a pattern to these three stories in [Luke 15](#): there is a loss (of the smaller part), a search (that is constant), a find (that takes great effort), a homecoming, and a celebration (that is community-wide).

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Luke 15 (Author = Luke)

### The Parable of the Lost Sheep

**1 Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. 2 And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, "This Man receives sinners and eats with them." 3 So He spoke this parable to them, saying:**

So right away, we find out why Jesus tells these make-believe stories (parables): to respond to the argument of the Pharisees and scribes (the religious elite). The religious elite felt that a person who had favor of God should not hang out with sinners—and certainly not eat with them.

**4 "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness** [Did the 99 do anything wrong? No, they were where they were supposed to be. What if Jesus had said that the 99 got angry? That would be silly, right? Of course—but this is only the first of the parables that Jesus is going to tell and He's setting up His audience. By the way, what percentage is lost? **1%**], **and go after** [pursue] **the one which is lost** [a compound word that means, 'separating to **death**' (the gap between where it was supposed to be and where it is was going to kill it if not bridged)] **until he finds it? 5 And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders** [What can you do with your shoulders? You can shrug them, drop them, proverbially we can give someone a cold one, push something with them, or you can carry something with them. We use our shoulders to illustrate emotional and physical engagement with the activity in front of us. In [Deuteronomy 33:12](#), Moses gives his final blessings on the tribes of Israel and says this of the tribe of Benjamin: **Of Benjamin he said: "The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by Him, Who shelters him all the day long; And he shall dwell between His shoulders."**], **rejoicing** [the shepherd is happy to find the lost sheep; **David Guzik: When Jesus carries us, He does it with rejoicing, not with a grudge, but gladly**]. **6 And when he comes**

home, he calls together *his* friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!’ [the community party] **7 I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.**

### The Parable of the Lost Coin

**8 “Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin** [One coin? We are wasting a whole parable on one coin? How could one coin be valuable? One possibility is that it was part of a larger piece of jewelry. What percentage is lost? **10%**. The significance of the lost things is getting bigger. Is there ever a time when a wedding ring is equally as valuable as a penny?], **does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it?** [David Guzik: There is an instinct in us that prizes something all the more simply because it is lost. Your keys are never so precious to you as when you can’t find them!] **9 And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!’** [What if Jesus said that the other nine coins got angry and did not want to have anything to do with the tenth piece? Ludicrous!] **10 Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”** [Here is this curious statement again—Jesus is driving home to the religious elite that everyone **matters**. Jesus is for everybody. Moreover, we have no right to think otherwise.]

### The Parable of the Lost Son

**11 Then He said: “A certain man had two sons. 12 And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.’ So he divided to them** [a better translation is probably ‘him’] **his livelihood. 13 And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living** [What percentage is lost? **50%** (or 33% if you are looking at the inheritance piece—but either way, the value of that which is lost is getting higher). **14 But when he had spent** [squandered] **all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. 15 Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he** [the citizen] **sent him into his fields to feed swine.** [Have any of you ever worked near pigs? I used to live a few miles from a pig farm and when the wind blew a certain way, it was almost unbearable. I cannot imagine working in a pig farm.] **16 And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything.** [Irby Sullivan: Want follows waste. Sin is the most expensive thing in the world.]

**17 “But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, 19 and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.”’**

**20 “And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion** [moved], **and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. 21 And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.’**

**22 “But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring out the best robe and put *it* on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on *his* feet. 23 And bring the fatted calf here and kill *it*, and let us eat and be merry; 24 for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to be merry.**

I used to wonder why the story did not end there. Everyone could just live happily ever after. Is that not how God wants it to end? Then I realized that the point that Jesus is making is not that everyone lives happily ever after, it is that sinners and tax collectors are **welcome** in the family of God. The story has to continue to show the religious elite their sin. The story has to continue to show me my **sin**.

**25 “Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. 27 And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.’**

**28 “But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with [entreated—brought him close to his side] him. 29 So he answered and said to *his* father, ‘Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time [I am confident that all of us have exaggerated this way when we were angry]; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. 30 But as soon as this son of yours [not, ‘my brother’] came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots [How did the older son know this fact about the harlots? The younger son’s reputation preceded him. Sometimes our reputations for sin precede us], you killed the fatted calf for him.’**

**31 “And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. 32 It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.’”**

**Irby Sullivan: 12-13: The break up; 15: The hook up; 17: The wake up; 20: The rise up; 21: The fess up; 22: The dress up; 24: The cheer up**

Challenge: Recognize, pursue, and celebrate reconciliation

Quick question: Where is Jesus in the parable? He is the Way home to the lost sheep; He is the Way back to the purse for the lost coin; He is the Way back to the Father for the lost son. Jesus is the Way!

### **Apply (What is the point?)**

1. The sheep was lost because it wandered off (sometimes we just wander away from God)
2. The coin was lost because someone dropped it (sometimes we are failed by others)
3. The son was lost because he was prideful (sometimes we deliberately choose to rebel)

### **Personalize (What do I do with that?)**

1. Stay **focused** on Jesus (the Way)
2. Stay **engaged** with the church
3. Stay **humbled** before God

# The Essential 100

---

## A Bible overview plan for 2011-2012

The Essential 100 (E100) is a systematic approach that guides readers through the big picture of the Bible. It is a carefully selected list of short Bible passages—50 from the Old Testament and 50 from the New Testament. Each testament is broken up into ten, five-week series. We will move from Old to New Testaments every five weeks. My goal is to teach three of the five lessons in every series.

The E100 in Sunday school: We will REAP (read, explain, apply, and personalize) one passage each week and finish a series every five weeks. Each lesson will include a key verse for memorization. At the end of two years, we will have covered the essential 100 passages in the Bible.

Additional information: To learn more about The E100 program and to obtain additional resources, visit [e100challenge.com](http://e100challenge.com). Our Sunday school website is [stuartheights.org/sundayschool](http://stuartheights.org/sundayschool).

## The Schedule: The Miracles of Jesus

This is our third five-week series in the New Testament. So far, we have looked at The Early Years of Jesus and The Teachings of Jesus. Now we shift to The Miracles of Jesus.

Date	Lesson	Key Verse(s)	Passage	Speaker
July 3	Feeding the Five Thousand	Luke 9:16-17	Luke 9:1-36	Jim Fleming
July 10	Walking on Water	Matthew 14:31-33	Matthew 14:22-36	Jim Fleming
July 17	Healing a Blind Man	John 9:6-7	John 9:1-41	Jim Fleming
July 24	Healing a Demon-Possessed Man	Mark 5:18-20	Mark 5:1-20	Terry Bolden
July 31	Raising Lazarus from the Dead	John 11:43-44	John 11:1-57	Jim Fleming

## Series Preview

Before we get into the first passage for this series, it is helpful to answer a basic question about Jesus and miracles: Why did Jesus perform miracles? The answer is **John 20:30-31: And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.** Jesus did miracles to help us believe in Him so that we could have **life**. He did miracles for us.

There were several secondary benefits of Jesus' miracles: (1) some people directly benefited from them, (2) His miracles showed His compassion, (3) His miracles helped to bolster His disciples' faith, and (4) His miracles provided Him with an audience to hear His message.

However, the primary reason for Jesus' miracles was so that we could experience the life that He brought. He did miracles for us.

With that basic question answered, let us now turn to the first text for this series: **Luke 9:1-36.**

# The Miracles of Jesus: Feeding the Five Thousand

---

## Review

Jesus came to restore a relationship between God and man that was created in **Genesis 1** and ruined in **Genesis 3**. When we listen to Jesus' teachings, remember that He came to restore relationships to their proper place. Jesus, however, was on a very specific timetable and was not in a hurry. Sometimes, Jesus even told those around Him *not* to tell others about what they saw. This gave the witnesses time to process what they saw.

Key thought: Reflection is a significant input to a long obedience in the same direction of sharing Christ

## Preview: 3-D Miracles

**Luke 9:1-36** fits easily into three parts: the sending out, the feeding of the 5,000+, and the change. In all three parts, miracles occur. Jesus distributes miracle-power to the disciples in the sending, He demonstrates miracle-power in the feeding, and He displays a miracle in the change. It is all about Jesus.

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Luke 9:1-36 (Author = Luke)

### Sending Out the Twelve

**1 Then He called His twelve disciples** [followers of a rabbi] **together and gave them power** [*dunamis* (explosive dynamite-like power)] **and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases** [notice that demons and diseases are two different things]. **2 He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal** [*iaomai*, to cure, heal, to make whole] **the sick.** **3 And He said to them, "Take nothing for the journey, neither staffs** [walking stick] **nor bag** [wallet] **nor bread nor money; and do not have two tunics apiece.** [David Guzik: There was a rule among the rabbis of the day that you could not enter the temple area with a staff, shoes, or a moneybag, because you wanted to avoid even the appearance of being engaged in any other business than the service of the Lord]

**4 "Whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart. 5 And whoever will not receive you, when you go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet as a testimony against them** [EasyEnglish: Jews always shook the dust off their feet when they returned from Gentile territory]."

**6 So they departed and went through the towns, preaching the gospel** [to bring **good** news, to announce glad tidings] **and healing everywhere.**

### Herod Seeks to See Jesus

**7 Now Herod the tetrarch** [not Herod the Great who killed Jewish boys, but his son, Herod Antipas—the one responsible for John the Baptist's death] **heard of all that was done by Him; and he was perplexed** [to be entirely at loss—think of the last time you did not know which way to turn while driving], **because it was said by some that John** [John the Baptist] **had risen from the dead,** **8 and by some that Elijah had appeared** [not risen from the dead, because he did not die], **and by others that one of the old prophets had risen again.** **9 Herod said, "John I have beheaded, but who is this of whom I hear such things?" So he sought** [imperfect active (repetitive action) to seek in order to find] **to see Him.**

### Feeding the Five Thousand

**10 And the apostles** [no longer disciples, but apostles because they were sent with **authority**], **when they had returned, told Him all that they had done. Then He took them and went aside privately into a deserted place belonging to the city called Bethsaida** [a small fishing village that was the home of Andrew, Peter, Philip, and John]. **11 But when the multitudes knew it, they followed Him** [Jesus was **popular** with the people]; **and He received them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God** [maybe He gave them one of His standard sermons like the Sermon on the Plain], **and healed those who had need of healing** [notice the difference between Christ's healing and the apostles' healing: the apostles had to get their power from Jesus; Jesus got His power from **Himself**; **Adam Clarke: Observe here five grand effects of Divine grace. 1. The people are drawn to follow him. 2. He kindly receives them. 3. He instructs them in the things of God. 4. He heals all their diseases. 5. He feeds their bodies and their souls. . . . Reader! Jesus is the same to the present moment. Follow him, and he will receive, instruct, heal, feed, and save thy soul unto eternal life.**]. **12 When the day began to wear away, the twelve came and said to Him, "Send the multitude away, that they may go into the surrounding towns and country, and lodge and get provisions; for we are in a deserted place here."**

**13 But He said to them, "You give [an imperative] them something to eat." And they said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless we go and buy food for all these people." 14 For there were about five thousand men** [probably 20,000 total people]. **Then He said to His disciples, "Make them sit down in groups [rows] of fifty." 15 And they did so, and made them all sit down.**

**16 Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed** [imperfect active again—he kept on blessing it—the word means to praise, celebrate with praises, to invoke blessings, to consecrate a thing with solemn prayers (to ask God's blessing on a thing, to pray God to bless it to one's use)—this fact shows up in all four of the Gospels because Jesus prayed differently] **and broke them** [aorist tense—it only happened one time—Jesus gave thanks **continually** and broke the food **once**], **and gave them to the disciples to set before the multitude. 17 So they all ate and were filled** [filled, satisfied; **David Guzik: What we have in ourselves to give others is insignificant, but when we put it in Jesus' hands, He can do great things with our gifts and talents to touch the lives of others**], **and twelve baskets of the leftover fragments** [broken pieces, remnants] **were taken up by them.**

### Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ

**18 And it happened, as He was alone praying, that His disciples joined Him, and He asked them, saying, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" 19 So they answered and said, "John the Baptist, but some say Elijah; and others say that one of the old prophets has risen again." 20 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered and said, "The Christ of God."** [From disciples to apostles to believers]

### Jesus Predicts His Death and Resurrection

**21 And He strictly warned and commanded them to tell this to no one** [You did not see that coming, did you?], **22 saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day."** [It was not yet time for this message]

### Take Up the Cross and Follow Him

**23 Then He said to *them* all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself [to **forget** one's self, lose sight of one's self and one's own interests], and take up his cross daily, and follow Me [because disciples follow—they do not lead].** **24 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it [David Guzik: You don't *lose* a seed when you plant it, though it seems dead and buried. In truth, you set it free to be what it was always intended to be.].** **25 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? 26 For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels.**

### Jesus Transfigured on the Mount

**27 But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the kingdom of God.”**

**28 Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James [the inner circle] and went up on the mountain to pray. 29 As He prayed, the appearance [outside] of His face was altered [literally, **other**], and His robe *became white* [brilliant from whiteness] *and* [notice the *and* is added] *glistening* [to flash out like lightning, to shine, be radiant—think, **sparkler**].** **30 And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, 31 who appeared in glory and spoke [Jamieson, Fausset, Brown: Moses represented “the law,” Elijah “the prophets,” and both together the whole testimony of the Old Testament Scriptures] of His decease [exodus: to exit, depart, departure from life, decease] which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. 32 But Peter and those with him were heavy [burdened, weighed down, depressed] with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory [the curtain of **flesh** was pulled back to display the glory of God] and the two men who stood with Him. 33 Then it happened, as they were parting from Him, *that* Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah” [Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures: Peter proposes that they celebrate [the feast of tabernacles] up here instead of going to Jerusalem]—not knowing what he said.**

**34 While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were fearful as they entered the cloud. 35 And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!” 36 When the voice had ceased, Jesus was found alone. But they kept quiet, and told no one in those days any of the things they had seen.** [This was a lot to process, they needed time, and that was OK]

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. The best way to expand God's Kingdom is to **give** it away
2. Contemplation/meditation/reflection/consideration/deliberation is a good thing
3. God will **provide** (provision for the journey, food for the rest, and protection in the afterlife)

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Give away life (whether it be bread, the Gospel, or by showing the glory of God in your life)
2. Spend time reflecting on what God has done for you
3. **Enjoy** the journey with God (I so often forget because I get in such a hurry)



# The Miracles of Jesus: Walking on Water

---

## Preview: Waverunners

Some think that becoming a Christian exempts them from life's problems. Unfortunately, that is not true. However, no matter how bad things get, God never abandons His own. Last week we saw that Jesus provided provision for the journey, food for times of rest, and protection in the afterlife. This week we see that Jesus provided companionship in the storm and comfort from the sickness. The amazing thing (to me) is not that Jesus saved the disciples—it is that He did it personally.

Key thought: Jesus is faithful even when we are not, so stay focused on **Jesus** and His Word

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Matthew 14:22-36 (Author = Matthew)

### Jesus Walks on the Sea

**22 Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat** [Last week we looked at the feeding of the five thousand and this week's miracle takes place immediately after that (the **same** day, in fact). Jesus' disciples had just witnessed Him provide for their physical hunger and were probably still carrying the baskets of food that would have served as visible reminders of Jesus' provision. Now they are going to get to witness Him providing companionship and calm in a time of storm.] **and go before Him to the other side, while He [Jesus] sent the multitudes away** [remember that Jesus knows what is going to happen, so He is setting the stage for the events in this chapter]. **23 And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray** [again demonstrating to us how important a relationship with the Father is]. **Now when evening** [specific word for **6** pm – **9** pm] **came, He was alone there. 24 But the boat was now** [I think at 6 – 9 pm] **in the middle of the sea** [this sea is about 10-12 miles wide at its widest point], **tossed** [harassed, distressed] **by the waves, for the wind was contrary** [against, opposite, hostile, antagonistic, an opponent].

**25 Now in the fourth watch of the night** [specific word for **3** am – **6** am—implying that the disciples were alone in the storm for a while] **Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. 26 And when the disciples saw Him** [again (just like last week) we see the focus on them being eyewitnesses] **walking on the sea,**

[We are going to take an aside to **Job 9:1-24** to see Job's take on who could walk on water:

**1 Then Job answered and said** [to his friends]:

**2 "Truly I know it is so, But how can a man be righteous before God?**

**3 If one wished to contend with Him, He could not answer Him one time out of a thousand.**

**4 God is wise in heart and mighty in strength. Who has hardened himself against Him and prospered?**

**5 He removes the mountains, and they do not know When He overturns them in His anger;**

**6 He shakes the earth out of its place, And its pillars tremble;**



**7 He commands the sun, and it does not rise; He seals off the stars;**

**8 He alone spreads out the heavens, And treads on the waves of the sea;**

**9 He made the Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades, And the chambers of the south;**

**10 He does great things past finding out, Yes, wonders without number.**

**11 If He goes by me, I do not see *Him*; If He moves past, I do not perceive Him;**

**12 If He takes away, who can hinder Him? Who can say to Him, 'What are You doing?'**

**13 God will not withdraw His anger, The allies of the proud lie prostrate beneath Him.**

**14 "How then can I answer Him, *And* choose my words to reason with Him?**

**15 For though I were righteous, I could not answer Him; I would beg mercy of my Judge.**

**16 If I called and He answered me, I would not believe that He was listening to my voice.**

**17 For He crushes me with a tempest, And multiplies my wounds without cause.**

**18 He will not allow me to catch my breath, But fills me with bitterness.**

**19 If *it is a matter* of strength, indeed *He is* strong; And if of justice, who will appoint my day in court?**

**20 Though I were righteous, my own mouth would condemn me; Though I were blameless, it would prove me perverse.**

**21 "I am blameless, yet I do not know myself; I despise my life.**

**22 It is all one *thing*; Therefore I say, 'He destroys the blameless and the wicked.'**

**23 If the scourge slays suddenly, He laughs at the plight of the innocent.**

**24 The earth is given into the hand of the wicked. He covers the faces of its judges. If it is not *He*, who else could it be?** [Job says the only one that can walk on water is **God**! Now, back to **Matthew 14:26b**]

**they** [the disciples] **were troubled** [agitated, troubled (because the movement of the parts of a thing are going back and forth), inward commotion, removed of calmness of mind, disturbed, disquieted, restless, stirred up, anxious, distressed, perplexed], **saying, "It is a ghost** [*phantasma*: appearance, an apparition, specter]!" **And they cried out for fear** [fear, dread, terror, that which strikes terror].

**27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer** [an imperative: to be of good cheer, to be of good courage (this phrase reminds me of advice you would give to the cowardly lion from *The Wizard of Oz*)]! **It is I** [literally, **I am**]; **do not be afraid** [an imperative: don't be scared, don't be afraid, don't be alarmed, don't be startled, don't be amazed, don't fear]."

**28 And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command** [command, order] **me to come to You on the water."** [Adam Clarke: A weak faith is always wishing for signs and miracles. . . . He [Jesus] is to be credited on his own word, because he is the TRUTH]

**29 So He** [Jesus] **said, "Come** [an imperative]." **And when Peter had come down out of the boat** [John Ortberg: *If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat*], **he walked on the water to**

**go to Jesus. 30 But when he saw that the wind was boisterous** [strong, mighty, strong, violent, forcibly uttered, firm—Peter took his **eyes** off Jesus (mowing example)], **he was afraid** [agitated, troubled (because the movement of the parts of a thing are going back and forth), inward commotion, removed of calmness of mind, disturbed, disquieted, restless, stirred up, anxious, distressed, perplexed]; **and beginning to sink** [Adam Clarke: It was by faith in the power of Christ he was upheld. . . It was not the violence of the winds, nor the raging of the waves, which endangered his life, but his *littleness of faith*] **he cried out, saying, “Lord, save me!”** [An imperative: to save, keep safe and sound, to rescue from danger or destruction, save from suffering, save from perishing. Bruce: It is one thing to see a storm from the deck of a stout ship, another to see it in the midst of the waves]

**31 And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught** [to take in addition, to lay hold of, take possession of, overtake, attain, attain to, to lay hold of or to seize upon anything with the hands, to take hold of, lay hold of] **him, and said to him, “O you of little faith, why** [who, which, what] **did you doubt** [doubt, waiver, the root word means, **twice** (i.e., pulled two ways)]?” **32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased** [to grow weary or **tired**, to cease from violence, cease raging (i.e., the wind got tired from fighting the Lord of all Creation)].

**33 Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped** [to kiss the hand to (towards) one, in token of reverence] **Him, saying, “Truly** [truly, of a truth, in reality, most certainly] **You are the Son of God.”**

### Many Touch Him and Are Made Well

**34 When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret. 35 And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent out into all that surrounding region** [increased faith causes increased **activity** for the One you have faith in (i.e., the disciples got busy)], **brought to Him all who were sick** [miserable, to be ill], **36 and begged Him that they might only touch the hem** [the extremity or prominent part of a thing, edge, skirt, margin; the fringe of a garment; in the New Testament a little appendage hanging down from the edge of the mantle or cloak, made of twisted wool; a tassel, tuft] **of His garment. And as many as touched it were made perfectly well** [to preserve through danger, to bring safely through (to save, i.e. cure one who is sick, bring him through); to save, keep from perishing; to save out of danger, rescue. Coffman: He needed no staff, as did Moses; he needed no mantle, as Elijah; he required no instrument except himself. His word alone cast out demons, stilled the tempest, changed the water into wine, and raised the dead!].

Challenge: Problems are our opportunities to get out the boat and follow Jesus.

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. The **storm** is when we show our allegiance
2. God will **provide** (companionship in the storm and comfort in the sickness)

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Build up a pattern of obedience before the storm so that **when** storms come, my habit is focusing on Jesus and His Word
2. **Enjoy** the journey with God (I so often forget because I get in such a hurry)

# The Miracles of Jesus: Healing a Blind Man

---

Last week this message was preached by Gary and Brian in our Sunday morning services. Since many of us heard that message, I am going to spend a lot of time today answering questions that were posed about that text. Feel free to interrupt me today while I am teaching to ask questions.

## Preview: I See What You Mean

After hearing about the miraculous healing of a blind man ([John 9:6-7](#)), the disciples tried to over-analyze the blind man's predicament ([John 9:1-2](#)). However, in the midst of all the arguing, the blind man had the clearest insight of all. He started with a basic understanding of the facts ([John 9:11, 25](#)) and formed an opinion about Jesus ([John 9:17](#)) but finally made a decision to believe ([John 9:38](#)), in spite of the consequences ([John 9:34](#)). That is a good description of how to become a Christian.

Key thought: Religious **arrogance** is blinding

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): John 9 (Author = John)

### A Man Born Blind Receives Sight

**1 Now as Jesus passed by** [[John 8](#) talks about the fact that Jesus had just left the temple, so we can assume He is still relatively close to the temple], **He saw** [the text does not say that the disciples saw the man] **a man who was blind from birth** [the disabled would camp out next to the temple to beg for money]. **2 And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"** [To a degree, the disciples are correct theologically—Adam's sin did cause all men to be spiritually impaired and physically limited (death, sickness, etc.)—but this question shows their callousness (hopefully the blind man could not **hear** this question)]

**3 Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works** [business, employment—Jesus' business was to reveal God] **of God should be revealed in him.** [**Am I willing to be physically impaired so that the glory of God can be evident in my life?** ([2 Corinthians 12:7-10](#))] **4 I must** [the word for necessary] **work** [labor, work, make gains by doing business, work out, exercise, perform, produce, work for, earn by working, acquire] **the works** [business, employment] **of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming** [**What does this, 'night,' refer to?** The time when Christ would no longer be on earth—probably only six months away here] **when no one can work** [labor, work, make gains by doing business, work out, exercise, perform, produce, work for, earn by working, acquire—Jesus is saying that He is the only one that can accomplish what He was sent to do—we can't work our way to heaven, but **Jesus** can work our way to heaven]. **5 As long as I am** [BOOM!] **in the world, I am** [BOOM!] **the light of the world."** [I love the bold, audacious, secure, and gloriously confident statements of Jesus. Jesus even uses an analogy of light that is relevant to the story (we use light to see). **Coffman: The world cannot do without Jesus**]

**6 When He had said these things, He spat** [Greek = *ptuo* (pronounced, ptoo'-o)] **on the ground and made clay** [**Albert Whiting: Adam was made from dirt and was blind. Jesus healed the man by using**

dirt so he could see, not only physically but also spiritually. God does not mind getting His hands dirty] **with the saliva** [Barnes' New Testament Notes: The Jews regarded *spittle* as medicinal to the eyes when diseased]; **and He anointed** [spread on] **the eyes** [perhaps this is referring to the eyelids, but we cannot be sure since there is no Greek word in the New Testament for eyelids] **of the blind man with the clay**. [Jesus got **personally** involved; David Guzik: In this miracle, Jesus took all the initiative. The blind man did not come to Jesus and ask to be healed, Jesus came to Him. . . . Not many people would appreciate having mud made with spit rubbed in their eyes. Some would look at how Jesus did this miracle and object, saying that it was offensive, inadequate, or even harmful to rub mud made with spit in a man's eyes. In the same way, some feel that the gospel is *offensive*. . . In the same way, some feel that the gospel is *inadequate*. . . In the same way, some feel that the gospel is *harmful*, that the free offer of grace in Jesus will cause people to sin.] **7 And He said to him, "Go** [an imperative], **wash** [an imperative] **in the pool of Siloam** [Where was this pool? Just southeast of Jerusalem (probably less than half a mile from where they were standing—**Terry** can show you).]" **(which is translated, Sent). So he went** [obedience #1] **and washed** [obedience #2], **and came back seeing** [most people interpret this as the blind man coming back to Jesus, but he actually went back home—as indicated in **John 9:8**]. [Giving sight to the blind is a work of God alone (**Psalm 146:8**) and is a sign of the Messiah (**Isaiah 35:5**).]

**8 Therefore the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was blind said, "Is not this he who sat and begged?" 9 Some said, "This is he." Others said, "He is like him." He said, "I am he." 10 Therefore they said to him, "How were your eyes opened?"**

**11 He answered and said, "A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed, and I received sight."** [This is a perfect example of a testimony. Telling the stories of how we came to meet Jesus and how our lives are different as a result. It does not have to contain a miracle, but it has to be our story.]

**12 Then they said to him, "Where is He?" He said, "I do not know."** [So Jesus is not around for what happens next—and, this man has never seen Jesus with his own eyes, so the blind man would not recognize Jesus even if he saw Jesus]

### **The Pharisees Excommunicate the Healed Man**

**13 They brought him who formerly was blind to the Pharisees** [enemies of Jesus and Jesus' cause who were focused on outward piety and not inward obedience—pay attention to how hard the Pharisees try to make their application of Scripture correct and exclude Jesus (they serve as a great warning to us all not to fall in love with our own applications of Scripture)]. **14 Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. 15 Then the Pharisees also asked him again how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see."**

**16 Therefore some of the Pharisees said, "This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath** [They were missing the Creator because of misinterpretation of the Creator's rules—the Old Testament does **not** prohibit what Jesus did—their manmade extensions of the Old Testament Sabbath rules did, though. Barnes' New Testament Notes: Men often assume their own interpretations of the Scriptures to be infallible, and then judge and condemn all others by those interpretations.]."

**Others said, “How can a man who is a sinner** [in the Bible (as strange as it may sound to us), there is a difference between one who sins and a sinner—a sinner is someone who has made an art of sin] **do such signs?”** [They should have remembered their Old Testament because the Messiah was the One who could do such things as this] **And there was a division among them.** [Jesus always causes division]

**17 They said to the blind man again, “What do you say about Him because He opened your eyes?” He said, “He is a prophet.”** [He was, “the Man called Jesus” and now, “He is a prophet”]

**18 But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and received his sight** [their minds were made up and they were not interested in being confused with the facts], **until they called the parents of him who had received his sight. 19 And they asked them, saying, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?”** [The man formerly blind had already answered this question, but arrogance usually rules—even in religious circles]

**20 His parents answered them and said, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; 21 but by what means he now sees we do not know, or who opened his eyes we do not know. He is of age; ask him. He will speak for himself** [If we ever get a chance to testify about Jesus, we should do it! They had an opportunity to testify of Christ and they passed. **Did the blind man’s parents become believers?** It does not appear that they were headed that direction].” **22 His parents said these things because they feared the Jews** [they should have been excited to testify about Jesus because He healed their son and their son could now support himself instead of begging for a living], **for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed that He was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue** [What does put out of the synagogue mean? **Excommunicated**. The Fourfold Gospel; To be put out of the synagogue was to be put on a level with the heathen, and to be left without a country or a religious fellowship; Barnes’ New Testament Notes: A solemn exclusion for ever from the worship of the synagogue . . . and an exclusion from all intercourse with the people. This was called the *curse*, and so thoroughly excluded the person from all communion whatever with his countrymen, that they were not allowed to sell to him anything, even the necessities of life.]. **23 Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”** [Were his parents kicked out of the synagogue? **No**—they played it safe]

**24 So they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, “Give God the glory! We know that this Man is a sinner.”** [God save us from such arrogant ignorance. The ironic thing is that the formerly blind man *had* been giving God the glory—the Pharisees just did not recognize Jesus as God.]

**25 He answered and said, “Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see** [I LOVE this guy—he stays on message].” **26 Then they said to him again, “What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?”** [Arrogance persists in the face of truth] **27 He answered them, “I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become His disciples? [Ha ha ha!]” 28 Then they reviled him and said, “You are His disciple, but we are Moses’ disciples. 29 We know that God spoke to Moses; as for this fellow, we do not know where He is from.”**

**30 The man answered and said to them, “Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my eyes!** [i.e., only God can heal and that makes Him God and you do

not know God] **31 Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. 32 Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind** [there were no Old Testament accounts of the blind receiving their sight—but this was listed as a sign of the coming of the Messiah and the Jews would not accept that]. **33 If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing.** [So he knows his theology, too! I would not have anticipated such reasoning and intelligence from a blind beggar—but that is more of a statement about me than beggars. **The Fourfold Gospel: Opposition enlarges the faith and the confession of this man.**]"

**34 They answered and said to him, "You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?"** [Can you hear the arrogance?] **And they cast him out.** [**The People's New Testament: This miracle was officially investigated by the enemies of Christ, and they were compelled to admit it. The judicial investigation showed that he was born blind, that he was cured, and that Jesus gave him sight.**]

### True Vision and True Blindness

**35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him** [Again, Jesus gets personally involved—isn't He great?], **He said to him, "Do you believe in the Son of God?"**

**36 He answered and said, "Who is He, Lord,** [He was, **"the Man called Jesus"** and then, **"He is a prophet"** and now, **"Lord"**] **that I may believe in Him?"**

**37 And Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you."**

**38 Then he said, "Lord, I believe!" And he worshiped Him.** [Literally, to kiss the hand in token of reverence; to fall upon the knees and touch the ground with the forehead as an expression of profound reverence. Such a beautiful picture of a man made physically whole who was still spiritually blind until someone explained who Jesus was. It is not enough to do good works and expect men and women to come to Christ. We must explain who Christ is. On a side note, this was probably the first time this man ever got to worship—his blindness would have excluded him from worship in the temple. **The People's New Testament: He believes with the heart, confesses with the mouth, and shows his faith by his homage. Does the man remain a disciple long-term?** Probably, but we do not know for sure]

**39 And Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind."** [Translation: If you are looking for the truth, you will find it in Jesus, but if you are closed minded (blind) to the truth, it will blind you further; **Barnes' New Testament Notes: This is always the effect of truth. Where it does not soften it hardens the heart; where it does not convert, it sinks into deeper blindness and condemnation.**]

**40 Then some of the Pharisees who were with Him** [perhaps these were the Pharisees that were still reconciling healing apart from the divine] **heard these words, and said to Him, "Are we blind also?"**

**41 Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin** [If I admit that I cannot see on my own then I can be forgiven]; **but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains.** [They claimed to know the truth, but rejected the Light, and that kept them in the darkness of their sin]



Geneva Study Bible: Christ enlightens all those by the preaching of the Gospel who acknowledge their own darkness, but those who seem to themselves to see clearly enough, those he altogether blinds

Coffman: Those who would receive life and salvation of Christ must come in meekness and humility, confessing their sins, denying themselves, and crying, "Lord be merciful to me a sinner." The entrenched pride and conceit of the religious leaders were utterly repugnant to the Lord; and, as long as men were wrapped up in such a cloak of self-righteousness, there was absolutely no hope for them. As long as they cried, "We see!" their sin remained.

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. Lori Drake: The Pharisees **ruined** a really good day for a man who used to be blind!
2. Salvation is **both** a process and an instantaneous act [He was, "**the Man called Jesus**" and then, "**He is a prophet**" and then, "**Lord**" and then He was worshipped]
3. Religious arrogance can cause us to miss heaven
4. The Bible never gets **old**

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Don't rain on God's parade
2. Don't rush salvation—give people time to 'get' it (it is simple, but not simplistic)
3. Constantly reevaluate what I believe and rely on the Scripture (and not man's application)
4. Continue to study things after the **teaching** is over

### Summary (David Guzik)

John 9 paints a picture of how Jesus heals blind souls.

- We are all spiritually blind from birth
- Jesus takes the initiative in healing us from blindness
- Jesus does a work of *creation* in us, not reformation
- In this work, Jesus calls us to be obedient to what He commands
- Jesus commands us to be washed in the water of baptism
- We become a mystery to our former associates, not even seeming to be the same person
- We display loyalty to Jesus when we are persecuted, boldly and plainly testifying of His work in our lives and confounding others
- We pass from little knowledge to greater knowledge, and this brings us to greater worship and adoration

Last question: **What was the blind man's name?** We can reread this story trying to find the man's name and we will be amazed at the lengths that John goes to in order to **hide** his name.

- We never know the name of this man born blind. Jesus is the important One; a true disciple is content to remain anonymous if his Lord gets the glory

## The Miracles of Jesus: Healing a Demon-Possessed Man

---

### Preview: In the Name of Jesus (Mark 5:1-20, Luke 8:26-39, Matthew 8:28-34)

Let us briefly deal with the seeming disparity of these parallel passages. Some claim these are two different occurrences, but the likelihood of the story of the legion of demons being cast out into pigs and the pigs running down a hill to drown themselves in the Galilee seems highly improbable. We must first understand the purpose and audiences to which these Gospels were written. **Matthew** was written to Jews whereas **Mark** and **Luke** were written to Romans and Greeks, respectively. The two primary objections come from Matthew (different audience); with the first being that it lists a different location.

The country of the Gergesenes was a general and large location east and south of Galilee. It was filled with small towns and villages inhabited predominately by Jews. Given the prejudices of the Jews and Gentiles, this is important when trying to reach each different ethnic group, so Matthew uses the Jewish term for the area. Mark and Luke refer to it as the country of the Gadarenes, a Gentile name. Gadara was the largest and most prosperous cities of the Decapolis (meaning ten cities) named by the Romans. Gadara itself was several miles east of the Jordan about two-thirds of the way down from Galilee to the Dead Sea. It is not really close to Galilee, but many Greeks and Romans would understand the area by mentioning the country of the Gadarenes.

The second, and to many a larger stumbling block, is that Matthew writes that there are two men inhabited by demons. Several thoughts here greatly delude this objection. If there were two demon-possessed men, is stating there is one inaccurate? If I say there is a man in the room when there are actually seven, am I lying or am I wrong? Of course not! Mark and Luke say there is **a man**, not *only* one man. There could very well have been two men with one man being more prominent or outspoken than the other. This is often the case where you find two or more involved in some form of wickedness or depravity—there is usually a dominate person. There is also the possibility of one Jewish demoniac and one more dominant Gentile. Matthew would want to include the Jewish man because of his audience, whereas Mark and Luke would focus on the Gentile man for their audience (maybe because Jesus' miracles among Gentiles were so few). Whatever the specifics, these arguments allow plausible explanations for the marrying of these passages.

The area of our miracle today is northeast Galilee. There is a large graveyard in this area (evident even two thousand years later) used by the Gadara region and the topography is best suited for the event that will occur. This makes this a short ride from the Capernaum area where Jesus spent the majority of His time, did the majority of His miracles, and had just left ministering. The story follows Jesus' working in northern Galilee, after speaking many parables, doing miracles, and sending the multitudes away. Jesus and His disciples enter the boat, where Jesus goes to sleep and a vicious storm immediately envelopes the boat. You probably remember the story: the disciples (many were experienced fisherman) are terrified, awaken Jesus who calms the sea and the winds, and the disciples are dumbfounded by this display of power and authority. It is interesting to note that there is not any recorded word from the disciples from the time of this display of power, through the miracle of the demoniacs, until they all return across the sea.



My take on this: From the time of leaving northern Galilee, a spiritual battle ensues. We know the miracle of the demoniac is a serious spiritual battle. During Jesus' time on Earth, I believe Satan watched Him closely looking for every opportunity to stop Jesus or cause Him to fail His purpose (though the Devil clearly did not know what it was). In my opinion, the storm was a satanic broadside. Prior passages indicate Jesus was exhausted and **Mark 4** states other small ships followed His. Satan may very well have thought, "He is heading toward my territory." Why might he think that? How about the tombs, the large presence of demons, and the lack of devoted followers of Jehovah (Jewish pig farmers?) Satan might have seen this as an opportunity to deter the Son of God, kill some of His followers, or at least stop the Holy One from "invading" his territory.

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Mark 5:1-20 (Author = Mark)

### A Demon-Possessed Man Healed

**1 Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes. 2 And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, 3 who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains, 4 because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. 5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones.**

The demoniac was ready and immediately jumps into the fray. **Mark 5:6** says when he saw Jesus from far away, he ran towards Him. Jesus barely gets out of the boat (**immediately**) and the demons step up for the attack. The man lived in the tombs (and these still exist today), a place of decay and corruption, far away from any positive or opposing influence. **Mark 5:5** shows activity of the individuals and says the man was, "**crying out**." Why? He was tormented, miserable, and unable to find his way back to a peaceable life. The **cutting himself** could have also been from the demons. He may have been miserable enough to want out of this life, but the demons would not let him. Alternatively, the demons could have so hated what he represented that they wanted to alter/mar his visage. What did he represent? **Genesis 1:27** says we are created in the very **image of God**. **1 Corinthians 11:7** says we are also **the glory of God**.

**6 When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. 7 And he cried out with a loud voice and said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me."**

**8 For He said to him, "Come out of the man, unclean spirit!"**

Timeline (and all of this probably happened in a matter of just a few minutes—at most):

- The **frantic** run
- The **firm** command
- The **failed** feint
- The **foolish** counter-attack
- The **forced** surrender
- The **fearful** plea

In Western culture, we read and write using timelines, but the Eastern culture of communicating deemphasizes the timeline. The purpose and message are much more important. This is why the timeline of the Bible is often so hard to follow for us. I believe **Mark 5:6b-8** fall into a timeline in a reverse or mixed up order from the printing. We know **he ran** from verse six occurs first, because of verse two where he met Jesus **immediately** after He got out of the boat. After the man runs up Jesus says, **"Come out!"** This happens next from the past tense of **Mark 5:8** placing it before **Mark 5:7**. The response of the demons is, **"What have I to do with You?"** This is a Jewish response used at least eight times in scripture meaning "No." or "I don't want to." or "Do I have to?"

Also, in Middle Eastern thought (especially at the time of Christ), it was believed that in a disagreement, fight, or verbal joust, that using the other person's name gave you additional power over that individual. Therefore, following their attempted refusal the demons use the name of Jesus. That is when (I believe) the end of **Mark 5:6 (worshipped Him)** actually occurs. **Philippians 2:10** tells us that **at the name of Jesus every knee should bow**. The word worship in **Mark 5:6** literally means to fall on your knees and touch the ground with your forehead. This is not out of love that they worshipped Him, but out of necessity. Without saying a word, the power of Jesus name overwhelms the demons, they bow, and then they plead, **"do not torment me."** Notice it is not the man but the demons speaking, and they fear Jesus and His judgment. They know their bleak future (see **Matthew 25:41**) and refer to it as torment.

Personal thought: If the demons know their future and feared it, why is it that we know the future of those around us, yet we do not fear it? The knowledge of the future fate of those all around us ought to move us to tears and action and this thought should not just be pushed aside and forgotten.

**9 Then He asked him, "What is your name?" And he answered, saying, "My name is Legion; for we are many."**

- The **faltering** rebellion

The demons have not given up the fight, for as Jesus asks their name (He knows!), they give a number instead. The word legion was a numerical term that differed over the life of the Roman Empire, but at the time of Jesus, it represented 6,826. Remember knowing and using another's name in a contest was considered a power play, so the demons (bowing before Jesus with heads to the ground) refuse their name. Seems foolish, but we never know when we are licked either.

**10 Also he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country.**

**11 Now a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. 12 So all the demons begged Him, saying, "Send us to the swine, that we may enter them." 13 And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.**

- The **fleeing** alternative

The demons at this point probably realized it is over, but fearing their final place of torment plead for leniency, offer a way out, and plead to Jesus for leniency. **"Now a large herd of swine was feeding there**

**near the mountains.**” What has always astonished me is that Jesus says, “OK,” and grants their wish. Why? There are probably many thoughts to learn here, here are three of many glimpses of Jesus:

1. Jesus is **all-powerful**. Satan and his demons did all the fighting, but Jesus did all the winning. It is as if He put no effort into it. He says two things (**Come out** and **What is your name?**), but look at what they do:
  - a) They throw a storm at Him (trying to kill Him, His disciples, and/or followers) and maybe trying to lead Him on another course (**Mark 4**)
  - b) They run at Him (remember their strength) (**Mark 5:3-6**)
  - c) They try to use the power of His name (**Mark 5:7**)
  - d) They try to refuse His command (**Mark 5:7**)
  - e) They refuse to answer His question directly (**Mark 5:9**)

Jesus is all-powerful and is always in control. This story eloquently shows that.

2. Jesus is **loving**. The souls of two men are at stake and He is **not willing that any should perish** (**2 Peter 3:9d**). He went out of His way to reach one or two . . . how about me?
3. Jesus is **just**. Who lived in this area? Answer: Jews. What was their profession? Answer: pig-farmers. These were not the devout followers of God. They lived beyond the outskirts of society. They did not go looking for Jesus, but Jesus came to them (the story of us all). Pigs were anathema to the Jews and represented total rebellion to God. I believe that Jesus is pronouncing judgment on this community by sending the demons into the pigs, and the pigs running down the hill to drown. Why? Not totally to condemn them, but to get their attention. **2 Peter 3:9d-e** says He is **not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance**. His justness demands judgment, but His grace abounds (to every one of us)! Jesus came looking for him/them just as He came looking for us.

**14 So those who fed the swine fled, and they told it in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened. 15 Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one who had been demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. 16 And those who saw it told them how it happened to him who had been demon-possessed, and about the swine. 17 Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region.**

**Mark 5:11, 14, 16** say that not only were farmers hanging out nearby, but also they were close enough to see the whole event unfold. Reading this passage raises many questions to me. Why would anyone go near a tormented, wailing, violent, demon-possessed man? This was not just a group of thrill-seekers. They made a living near him and they literally lived nearby. They had grown at the least tolerant, if not comfortable with him close by. This did not bother them, but when their livelihood was affected . . .

Personal thought: I am curious what percentage of the universal church/SHBC/my Sunday school class/my small group are not bothered by or completely tolerate the wickedness around us, but if the wallet is touched, the gloves come off?

Why go and tell others? Simple answer: 2000 pigs. This would have affected many people besides the farmers, like butchers, food resellers, fertilizer users, and food buyers. Things would change like diets and pocketbooks.

**Mark 5:15:** “**Afraid**”: to put to flight by terrifying. There is no indication of fear from the demoniacs before, but now? **Mark 5:15.** Why? I wonder if conviction had not started to set in? If the demoniac can change, what then can my excuse possibly be? I believe they liked things exactly the way they were. They had grown comfortable. Here a man has been reborn/given new life. He can now be a productive member of society, but instead of rejoicing, they ask Jesus to leave.

Personal thought: How many times do we sit in church and hear a message thinking, “I sure hope Billy-Joe-Jim-Bob is listening, because he really needs this message.” How often do we miss the message aimed right at us? Sometimes we may even hear that still small voice say, “What about you?” We get uncomfortable, don’t we? Our tendency, unfortunately, is not to yield, but to argue with the voice or make excuses of why we can’t . . . it is too difficult . . . I am better than \_\_\_\_\_ . . . I am comfortable with my life right where it is now!

I firmly believe these people felt that conviction and rather than yield and do something about it, they asked the conviction (Jesus) to leave.

**18 And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. 19 However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, “Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.” 20 And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.**

Real and thorough change had taken place in this man’s life and he did what came natural. He desired to cling to Jesus. However, Jesus had an answer to this. It was not go to Bible school and seminary until he have all the answers about life and God. It was not join a church, study the Word, memorize scripture, and practice being the best Christian you can be. **Mark 16:15: And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”** Jesus’ message was, “Go and tell!” What did the man do? He obeyed. He went. He told. Moreover, what happened? People responded (**Mark 5:20**).

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. God did not call us to be **comfortable**
2. There is no one out of the reach of Jesus
3. Jesus still saves the living from among the dead

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Everyone has a comfort zone: **Get out** of it! This life is not about you or me. It is about God! He has saved you for a purpose . . . His purpose.
2. Everyone has a similar story: **Share** it! We were all dead and have been made alive. We were all blind, but now we see. We were all lost, but now we have been found. Let someone know.
3. Where do you see a need today: **Do** it! He has called you to do something (**Ephesians 2:10**). What can you do? What will you do?

# The Miracles of Jesus: Raising Lazarus from the Dead

---

## Review

This is the last lesson in a series of lessons on the miracles of Jesus. There is a progressively more powerful display of Jesus' supernatural power occurring here that He uses to teach us:

- In feeding the 5,000, Jesus shows His supernatural power to meet our **physical** needs
- In walking on water, Jesus shows His supernatural power over **natural** laws
- In healing a blind man, Jesus shows His supernatural power to **heal**
- In healing a demon-possessed man, Jesus shows His supernatural power over **Satan**
- In raising Lazarus from the dead, Jesus shows His supernatural power over **death**

Jesus teaches us many things about Himself through these miracles. The first thing that I observed about Jesus' miracles is that He personally gets involved. However, that is the story of Jesus, isn't it? When God showed up in the Old Testament, people got scared and ran away. Therefore, He showed up in the New Testament in the form of Jesus—God got personally involved.

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): John 11 (Author = John)

### The Death of Lazarus

**1 Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany** [this is not the same Lazarus that appeared in the story of the rich man and Lazarus—Lazarus was a common name at this time], **the town of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. 3 Therefore the sisters** [Mary and Martha] **sent to Him** [Jesus], **saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick."** [David Guzik: Where there is a true bond of love, there is no need to request a favor; it is enough to make the need known]

**4 When Jesus heard that, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it."** [Sounds similar to the blind man's reason for being sick, doesn't it? A lesson to learn that I skipped in the story of the blind man is that your sickness can be for God's glory. Christians get sick and die. This does not prove that Satan and sin win, but rather that Christianity is not the panacea for all earthly illnesses. Jesus will fix all illnesses one day, but that day is not today. We are to trust Him now in whatever state we find ourselves in.]

**5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus** [this statement should not imply that there were people that Jesus did not love because, obviously, Jesus loved everyone, but this family took special care of Jesus while He was on the earth and He loved them]. **6 So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was** [That does not sound like love to me—we are saved to serve, not to sit. **Why is Jesus sitting?** Because the power and glory of God would not be displayed as richly and as magnificently as they will be if He delays. God knows the end of the story and has an infinitely wide-reaching view—never doubt His timing.]. **7 Then after this He said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."**

**8 The disciples said to Him, “Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone You, and are You going there again?”**

**9 Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. 10 But if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.” 11 These things He said, and after that He said to them, “Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.”**

**12 Then His disciples said, “Lord, if he sleeps he will get well.” 13 However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep.** [Moreover, before you go throwing stones at the disciples’ slow understanding, please remember we would not have understood either—Jesus was intentionally keeping this revelation from them until they needed to know]

**14 Then Jesus said to them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. 15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him.”**

**16 Then Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with Him.”** [Thomas is ready to lay down his own life to die with Jesus—because the disciples thought Jesus would be stoned to death by the Jews at Judea. I love Thomas. Without Thomas, we would not have many answers that we have about Jesus—because Thomas doubted and asked many questions.]

### **I Am the Resurrection and the Life**

**17 So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days.** [Why four days? **David Guzik: Jesus did this in light of the Jewish superstition of that day that said a soul stays near the grave for three days, hoping to return to the body. Therefore, it was accepted that after four days there was absolutely no hope of resuscitation.**] **18 Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away** [on the east side]. **19 And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.** [Jews were well known for their profound and prolonged mourning for a dead relative. They would get dressed in all black, put ashes on their heads, and remain in silence or sing mournful songs to mourn the dead. Moreover, almost all of it was highly prescriptive.]

**20 Now Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. 21 Now Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.”**

**23 Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”**

**24 Martha said to Him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”** [Martha is a realist and is quick to make logical sense of everything (kind of like me)]

**25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. 26 And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?”**

**27 She said to Him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”**

### Jesus and Death, the Last Enemy

**28** And when she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, “The Teacher has come and is calling for you.” **29** As soon as she heard *that*, she arose quickly and came to Him. **30** Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was in the place where Martha met Him. **31** Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, “She is going to the tomb to weep there.”

**32** Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet [this is where we usually find Mary], saying to Him, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.” [I am not Colombo, but it appears to me that the sisters have been talking with each other about Jesus and where He should have been because they both make the same statement]

**33** Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping [loud mourning—visible and passionate mourning for the dead], and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned [literally, snorted in anger] in the spirit and was troubled [agitated, irritated]. **34** And He said, “Where have you laid him?”

They said to Him, “Lord, come and see.”

**35** Jesus wept [shed tears—silent and under control]. **36** Then the Jews said, “See how He loved him!”

**37** And some of them said, “Could not this Man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?” [Notice how big a deal healing the blind man was to the Jews—they thought if you could heal the blind, that overcoming death would be no big thing!]

### Lazarus Raised from the Dead

**38** Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it.

**39** Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” [Just a little foreshadowing]

Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, “Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been *dead* four days.”

**40** Jesus said to her, “Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?” [One of the more interesting studies in Scripture is looking at all of the places where God repeats Himself—when He does, amazing things usually immediately follow] **41** Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. **42** And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said *this*, that they may believe that You sent Me.” **43** Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth!” [The old joke is that Jesus had to say Lazarus’ name otherwise everyone that was dead in that area would have come forth] **44** And he who had died came out [BOOM! So the one thing that was left to defeat was now defeated—death. There is no fear in life and there is no fear in death—my Jesus has beaten both. He lived a perfect life and He has the power over death—what have we to fear?] bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Loose him, and let him go.”



### The Plot to Kill Jesus

**45 Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him.**

**46 But some of them went away** [this should encourage us to not get discouraged when we tell the story of what God has done in our life and some do not believe—there will always be some who do not believe, but that does not mean that we stop telling the story—because there will always be some who do believe] **to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did. 47 Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, “What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. 48 If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.”** [Their power and their positions were more important than their preaching (because they should have recognized that Jesus was the messiah and they should have been preaching Him)]

**49 And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all, 50 nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.” 51 Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, 52 and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.**

**53 Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death** [which is poor logic since Jesus has already demonstrated that He has power over death]. **54 Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there into the country near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim, and there remained with His disciples.**

**55 And the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves. 56 Then they sought Jesus, and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple, “What do you think—that He will not come to the feast?” 57 Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a command, that if anyone knew where He was, he should report it, that they might seize Him.** [This might appear to be a strange place to stop today, but this postscript illustrates that Jesus’ miracles did not win Him friends in high places]

Lazarus’ resurrection did not win him many friends either—later on in [John 12](#), we read that Lazarus was the target of the Jewish leaders and a plot was hatched to **kill** Lazarus as well because too many people believed in Jesus. The lesson is that a changed life (one snatched away from the power of sin) is a powerful argument for the supernatural power of Jesus.

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. Jesus got personally involved
2. **Love** can cause strong emotions
3. **Death** is not the end of the story

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Get involved
2. Love **visibly**
3. Tell **His** story



# The Essential 100

---

## A Bible overview plan for 2011-2012

The Essential 100 (E100) is a systematic approach that guides readers through the big picture of the Bible. It is a carefully selected list of short Bible passages—50 from the Old Testament and 50 from the New Testament. Each testament is broken up into ten, five-week series. We will move from Old to New Testaments every five weeks. My goal is to teach three of the five lessons in every series.

The E100 in Sunday school: We will REAP (read, explain, apply, and personalize) one passage each week and finish a series every five weeks. Each lesson will include a key verse for memorization. At the end of two years, we will have covered the essential 100 passages in the Bible.

Additional information: To learn more about The E100 program and to obtain additional resources, visit [e100challenge.com](http://e100challenge.com). Our Sunday school website is [stuartheights.org/sundayschool](http://stuartheights.org/sundayschool).

## The Schedule: The Final Days of Jesus

This is our fourth five-week series in the New Testament. So far, we have looked at The Early Years of Jesus, The Teachings of Jesus, and the Miracles of Jesus. Now we shift to The Final Days of Jesus.

Date	Lesson	Key Verse(s)	Passage	Speaker
September 11	The Last Supper	Luke 22:19-20	Luke 22:1-46	Jim Fleming
September 18	Arrest and Trial	John 18:38-40	John 18	Amy Valovcin
September 25	The Crucifixion	John 19:17-18	John 19	Jim Fleming
October 2	The Resurrection	John 20:19-20	John 20-21	Jim Fleming
October 9	The Ascension	Acts 1:9-11	Acts 1:1-11	Tim Archer

# The Final Days of Jesus: The Last Supper

---

## Review

Jesus came to restore a relationship between God and man that was created in [Genesis 1](#) and ruined in [Genesis 3](#).

## Preview: A Meal to Remember

Jesus takes His disciples to a quiet place and eats with them the Passover Seder. However, this is not just another Passover meal. Jesus changes the symbolism of the elements to additionally include His body (the bread) and His blood (the wine) and creates a new covenant that will last forever.

Key thought: Communion is more than just another meal

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Luke 22:1-46 (Author = Luke)

### The Plot to Kill Jesus

**1 Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called Passover. 2 And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill Him, for they feared the people.**

**3 Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve. 4 So he went his way and conferred [talked] with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him [Jesus] to them. 5 And they [the religious leaders] were glad [literally, rejoiced] exceedingly (a good way to check your spirit is to see how you react in the face of evil—do you rejoice or do you mourn?); for 9/11, we look back and mourn the loss of life while simultaneously rejoicing that evil is being defeated while simultaneously mourning that human life has to be taken to accomplish that task], and agreed to give him money.** [Pop quiz: How much money did Judas get? **30** pieces of silver. What could you buy with that amount? A **slave**] **6 So he [Judas Iscariot] promised and sought opportunity to betray Him [Jesus] to them in the absence of the multitude.** [There will be people that walk with you that will not **finish** the race. Love them, help them, but never focus on them—focus on Jesus. **Luke 22:1-6** occur days before the Passover. The disciples are following Jesus around for days with Satan indwelling Judas.]

### Jesus and His Disciples Prepare the Passover

**7 Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed. 8 And He sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat.”**

**9 So they said to Him, “Where do You want us to prepare?”** [Because He had no house of His own]

**10 And He said to them, “Behold, when you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house which he enters. 11 Then you shall say to the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says to you, “Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?”’ 12 Then he will show you a large, furnished upper room; there make ready.”**

**13 So they went and found it just as He had said to them, and they prepared the Passover.**

### Jesus Institutes the Lord’s Supper

**14 When the hour had come** [if you read the Gospels, you will see this phrase many times and it is finally here], **He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. 15 Then He said to them, “With fervent desire** [elsewhere in Scripture this word is translated as **lust**, craving] **I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; 16 for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”** [He is most likely referring to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb when all of His children will eat with Him in heaven]

**17 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, “Take this and divide it among yourselves; 18 for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”** [Pray and thank God for the blood of Jesus]

**19 And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”** [Pray and thank God for the body of Jesus]

**20 Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant** [this verse is why you have an Old Testament (covenant) and a New Testament (covenant) in your Bible] **in My blood, which is shed for you. 21 But behold, the hand of My betrayer is with Me on the table. 22 And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!”**

**23 Then they began to question among themselves, which of them it was who would do this thing.** [Because we constantly compare, don’t we? Think about how much of our lives is spent comparing ourselves to ourselves. Work, home, school, sports, etc. We forget about **2 Corinthians 10:12.**]

### The Disciples Argue About Greatness

**24 Now there was also a dispute** [literally a **love** of strife and contention] **among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest.** [And this is the result of comparing: disputes] **25 And He said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called ‘benefactors.’ 26 But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves.** [Tonight is deacon ordination at our church and the deacons in our church are the servants—not the leaders] **27 For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.** [Leadership comes through **service**, not through leadership]

**28 “But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials.** [There were dozens of men and women who followed Jesus and wanted to be His disciples that had fallen by the wayside throughout His ministry and these were the twelve that had stuck with Him] **29 And I bestow** [this word is only used when a man sets his house in order for his **death**—it means to make a covenant with (the King of Kings wants to enter into covenant with us)] **upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed** [the word just used—the covenant relationship that the Father has with the Son is described as the same relationship that the Son gives to us—this, I cannot fathom] **one upon Me, 30 that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging** [judging, ruling over] **the twelve tribes of Israel.”**

### Jesus Predicts Peter’s Denial

**31 And the Lord said, “Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked** [asked, demanded, desired to have, begged] **for you, that he may sift** [to sift, shake by inward agitation to try a person’s faith by taking them to the **edge**] **you as wheat. 32 But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.”** [WOW—imagine if the Devil thought you were enough of a threat that he asked the Father for you—and recognize that the Lord of all Creation is praying for you right now. **Stop and pray for the class that their faith would not fail**]

**33 But he said to Him, “Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.”**

**34 Then He said, “I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me.”**

### Supplies for the Road

**35 And He said to them, “When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?”**

So they said, “Nothing.” [Nothing in my hand I bring, Simply to the cross I cling. *Rock of Ages*]

**36** Then He said to them, “But now, he who has a money bag, let him take *it*, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. **37** For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: ‘*And He was numbered with the transgressors.*’ For the things concerning Me have an end.”

**38** So they said, “Lord, look, here *are* two swords.”

And He said to them, “It is enough.”

### The Prayer in the Garden

**39** Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him [they were going to be covered in the dust of their rabbi one more time]. **40** When He came to the place, He said to them, “Pray that you may not enter into temptation [temptation, trials].” [Stop and pray that the members of our class not enter into temptation]

**41** And He was withdrawn from them about a stone’s throw, and He knelt down and prayed, **42** saying, “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.” [Stop and pray that our class would drink of the cup that God has set aside for us to drink] **43** Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him [imagine the line of angels lining up for this assignment—all of heaven was watching the Prince of Peace petition the Father for strength and the Father looks at one angel and says, ‘Go and strengthen My Son’]. **44** And being in agony [used of gymnastics or **wrestling** when you are fighting for victory], He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. [The technical term for this is hematomidrosis—there only known instances of it occur under great stress such as someone about to be raped, someone about to be executed, and instances like that]

**45** When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow [sorrow, pain, grief, annoyance, affliction—used of people that are mourning—they were tired from being so **sad**]. **46** Then He said to them, “Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation.” [At the end of the day, they fell asleep on Him—they had followed Him for years and when He needs them, they fall asleep. Lord, help us not to fall asleep on you when You need us the most.]

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. Communion is not just another **meal**
2. Jesus is praying for us
3. Remember what **He** did

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Remember the **then** to help with the **now**
2. Pray for each other
3. Remember the right way (rejoice for the **sacrifice**, mourn for the **loss**)

# The Final Days of Jesus: Arrest and Trial

---

## Preview: The Big Decision

Pilate certainly did not care about fairness; he just wanted to avoid hassle ([John 18:29-35](#)). It does not seem like he cared too much about truth either ([John 18:38](#)). However, before he knew it, Pilate was faced with the most important decision of all time—what to do with Jesus? Eventually, everyone must make that decision. Is Jesus a source of anger and frustration; a hassle to be avoided; or is he “the way, the truth and the life” ([John 14:6](#))? It is important to carefully think it over; it is the biggest decision you will ever make.

Key thought: Deciding about Jesus is life’s biggest decision

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): John 18 (Author = John)

Intro: Thanks and Puggles

Jesus has washed the feet of his disciples and shared a great, “last meal,” with them. Jesus has said that one of His own will betray Him and that Peter will deny Him three times before the cock crows. Jesus has been in the garden praying the, “cup to pass from Him,” and for, “God’s will to be done.” An angel has come to strengthen Jesus in this his time—and we will see that strength.

## Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane

**1 When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered. 2 And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples. 3 Then Judas, having received a detachment of troops, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons.** [There has been a battle in a garden before. This time He and the disciples have entered without Judas. Wonder what the other disciples were thinking? “Detachment of troops” or band/cohort of soldiers; maybe several hundred men. They were prepared to take Jesus by **force**, thinking He would protest His arrest . . . little did they know.] **4 Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward** [He took the initiative] **and said to them, “Whom are you seeking?”** [He asked even though He knew who they were after. Even then, Jesus’ concern was **other** people.]

**5 They answered Him, “Jesus of Nazareth.”**

**Jesus said to them, “I am He.” And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them.** [I read that maybe this is recorded twice because the author, John, still can remember this image vividly: Judas on the other side, standing with the men that came to arrest Jesus] **6 Now when He said to them, “I am He,” they drew back and fell to the ground.** [How Awesome is our God? With a simple, “I AM,” He can bring people to their knees. He submits **willingly** to the troops arresting Him and then declares His **majesty** by knocking them over.]

**7 Then He asked them again, “Whom are you seeking?”**

**And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."**

**8 Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am *He*. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way,"**

[He will say this again on the cross. He went to the Father on our behalf saying take Me and let **student-name** go.] **9 that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, "Of those whom You gave Me I have**

**lost none."** [Referring to **John 17:12**: While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition [Judas], that the Scripture might be fulfilled.]

**10 Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.** [Peter is willing to defend his Lord by the **sword**. His strength fails him later.]

**11 So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?"** [Refers to the cup mentioned in **Matthew 26:39**, **Luke 22:42**, and **Mark 14:36** where Jesus calls out to the Father, "Let this cup pass from Me; yet not what I will but, Your will be done"]

### Before the High Priest

**12 Then the detachment of troops and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him. 13 And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year. 14 Now it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.** [Jesus was taken to Annas first more than likely because Annas' house was closest. Annas also had great influence over the Jewish nation. Annas had been high priest for a time and now his son-in-law was.]

### Peter Denies Jesus

**15 And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so *did* another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest. 16 But Peter stood at the door outside. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to her who kept the door, and brought Peter in. 17 Then the servant girl who kept the door said to Peter, "You are not also *one* of this Man's disciples, are you?"**

He said, "I am not."

**18 Now the servants and officers who had made a fire of coals stood there, for it was cold, and they warmed themselves. And Peter stood with them and warmed himself.** [David Guzik: [Peter] was **bold** with a sword in his hand, but a **coward** before a servant girl]

### Jesus Questioned by the High Priest

**19 The high priest then asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine.**

**20 Jesus answered him, "I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing. 21 Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them. Indeed they know what I said."** [Bam!! Just my opinion]

**22 And when He had said these things, one of the officers who stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, “Do You answer the high priest like that?”** [This is the start to Jesus’ brutal treatment]

**23 Jesus answered him, “If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?”** [Jesus stands strong in the face of opposition so we can stand strong in the face of opposition]

**24 Then Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.** [Maybe they are actually thinking, He is who He says He is]

### Peter Denies Twice More

**25 Now Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. Therefore they said to him, “You are not also *one* of His disciples, are you?”**

**He denied *it* and said, “I am not!”**

**26 One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of *him* whose ear Peter cut off, said, “Did I not see you in the garden with Him?” 27 Peter then denied again; and immediately a rooster crowed.** [Peter’s **courage** failed. His **love** for Jesus NEVER did.]

### In Pilate’s Court

**28 Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover.** [The Praetorium was the house where Pilate was living; meaning the dwelling place of the praetor, or chief of the province. This is also where he held court and tried his cases. The Jews considered even the touch of a Gentile to be defilement.] **29 Pilate then went out to them and said, “What accusation do you bring against this Man?”**

**30 They answered and said to him, “If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you.”**

**31 Then Pilate said to them, “You take Him and judge Him according to your law.”**

**Therefore the Jews said to him, “It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death,” 32 that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, signifying by what death He would die.** [Pilate had to go out to those that are accusing Jesus, since they did not want to enter the Praetorium. **David Guzik: If the Jews had put Jesus to death, He would have been stoned, instead of crucified, and His prophecy about His death [John 3:14] would not have been fulfilled.**]

**33 Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?”**

**34 Jesus answered him, “Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?”** [Even though His hour had come, He was still **Jesus**: The way, the truth the life!]

**35 Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?”** [You can try all you want, but you can never **avoid** Jesus]

**36 Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.”** [I can only imagine what His kingdom was doing/saying]

**37 Pilate therefore said to Him, “Are You a king then?”**

**Jesus answered, “You say *rightly* that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.”** [That settles it! I have heard Pastor Gary say before, “God **said** it that **settles** it!”]

**38 Pilate said to Him, “What is truth?” And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, “I find no fault in Him at all.** [Ask what other translations say for this line. No matter how it is said, NO FAULT was found. Jesus was innocent. God was **sentenced** for our **sin** because no fault was ever in this Man.]

### **Taking the Place of Barabbas**

**39 “But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?”**

**40 Then they all cried again, saying, “Not this Man, but Barabbas!” Now Barabbas was a robber.**

[Pilate was not going to go against the soldiers and authorities that brought Jesus to him and the crowd that was screaming for Barabbas. Do you think John, author of this book, threw that last line in of Barabbas being a robber for insight? Barabbas knows what it is like first hand for Jesus to stand in his place and die for his sins.]

Challenge: It is impossible not to make a decision about Jesus—one way or the other

### **Apply (What is the point?)**

1. Jesus took our place!
2. Truth always wins! (and there is nothing we can do about it)
3. God is always God! (No matter what we do to Him: **sell** Him out, **deny** Him, or try to **escape** Him)

Arrested Willingly, Stood Trial Blamelessly, Sentenced Innocently, Beaten Brutally, Suffered Immensely, Crucified Cruelly, Died Lovingly, Buried Poorly, Arose Beautifully, Returning Quickly! That is Truth worth standing for!!!

### **Personalize (What do I do with that?)**

1. What will you do with Jesus?



# The Final Days of Jesus: The Crucifixion

---

## Preview: An Unexpected God

Jesus came to restore a relationship between God and man that was created in [Genesis 1](#) and ruined in [Genesis 3](#). All throughout the Bible, God intervenes in and intersects with our lives in ways that we did not anticipate. During His ministry, Jesus did things that those around Him were not expecting Him to do. The Jews wanted a Messiah who would overthrow the Romans, not a Messiah who would die for the Romans. Jesus, through His life and through His death, completed the work His Father gave Him to do.

Key thought: **What happens when God shows up, but He is not what you wanted?**

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): John 19 (Author = John)

### The Soldiers Mock Jesus

**1 So then Pilate** [the prefect or **governor** of this area—primarily responsible for taxation, being the area's highest judge, and for commanding the military] **took Jesus and scourged** [[David Guzik: scourging had three purposes. First, it was used to beat the prisoner as a form of punishment. Second, it was used to extract a confession from the prisoner. Finally, in cases of crucifixion it was used to weaken the victim so he would die more quickly on the cross.](#)] **Him. 2 And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head** [[Where did thorns come from?](#) They were a result of Adam's sin], **and they put on Him a purple** [a royal color] **robe** [[Where did the need for clothes come from?](#) They were a result of Adam's sin]. **3 Then they said** [in the imperfect tense—meaning it was repeated over and over], **"Hail, King of the Jews!" And they struck Him** [in the imperfect tense—meaning it was repeated over and over] **with their hands** [striking with the palm on the face or boxing the ears].

**4 Pilate then went out again, and said to them, "Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault** [no cause/reason to charge Him with a crime] **in Him** [Amy taught us last week that Pilate said this in [John 18](#), so this is the second time Pilate declares Jesus innocent]."

### Pilate's Decision

**5 Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them, "Behold the Man!"**

**6 Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!"**

**Pilate said to them, "You take Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him."** [The **third** time Pilate declares Jesus innocent. Pilate kept dealing with Jesus because Pilate was trying to free Jesus and placate the crowd of Jews. True, Pilate had the legal authority over them, but Pilate did not want to have to explain to Caesar why the Jews were angry at Rome.]

**7 The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God."** [They were probably referring to [Leviticus 24:16](#) (which talks about

stoning a man for blasphemy); Hideous theology—He **always** was the Son of God: no one made Jesus, He is the always existing and eternally present Son of God. He always was, always is, and always will be the Son of God. No word or action of man can ever undo that fact.]

**8 Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid, 9 and went again into the Praetorium** [Pilate's home and the palace where Pilate would do his official business—the modern equivalent is the governor's mansion], **and said to Jesus, "Where are You from?" But Jesus gave him no answer.** [I have no clue why Jesus did not answer, but most of the commentators say it was some variation of showing Pilate strength in the face of death]

**10 Then Pilate said to Him, "Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?"**

**11 Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin."** [Jesus, in effect, stands as Pilate's judge and says that Judas and Caiaphas are more at fault than Pilate. Jesus is also clear here that all earthly authority is given from God.]

**12 From then on Pilate sought** [in the imperfect tense—meaning it was repeated over and over] **to release Him** [at this point, Pilate knew beyond any shadow of doubt that Jesus was truly innocent], **but the Jews cried out, saying, "If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's** [the Roman emperor—Pilate's boss] **friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar."**

**13 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat** [literally, the *bema* seat—the seat of judgment (**Jesus** will sit on the *bema* seat one day in heaven and judge **Pilate**)] **in a place that is called The Pavement** [Strong's Concordance: The word for "Pavement" is found nowhere else in the NT, but its Hebrew equivalent occurs just once in the OT, and it is evident that the Holy Spirit would have us link the two passages together. In 2 Kings 16:17 we read, "And King Ahaz cut off the panels of the carts, and removed the lavers from them; and he took down the Sea from the bronze oxen that were under it, and put it on a pavement of stones." In Ahaz's case, his act was the conclusive token of his surrender to abject apostasy. So here of Pilate coming down to the level of the apostate Jews. In the former case it was a Jewish ruler dominated by a Gentile idolater; in the latter, a Gentile idolater, dominated by Jews who rejected their Messiah!], **but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. 14 Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour** [John gives a Jewish hour—6 am (Mark tells us that the crucifixion actually began around 9 am)]. **And he said to the Jews, "Behold your King!"** [True words]

**15 But they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!"** [What happens when God shows up, but He is not what you wanted?]

**16 Then he** [Pilate] **delivered Him to them** [the Jewish leaders—the Sanhedrin] **to be crucified** [Have you ever done something at your job that you knew was wrong but you did it anyway to keep your job/title/position/salary?]. **Then they took Jesus and led Him away.**

### The King on a Cross

**17 And He** [Jesus], **bearing His cross** [and bearing my cross and bearing your cross], **went out to a place called the Place of a Skull** [Calvary], **which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, 18 where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center** [Other Gospels tell us that Jesus was crucified between two robbers (not thieves—the difference is that robbers steal directly off of someone and thieves just steal). It is interesting to note that the Roman Empire crucified people for robbery—so it shows you how very little crime was tolerated in those days.]. **19 Now Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS** [Jehovah is **salvation**] **OF NAZARETH** [one **separated**], **THE KING OF THE JEWS** [an incredibly true statement].

**20 Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. 21 Therefore the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, “Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but, ‘He said, “I am the King of the Jews.””** [Both were true, but the difference is important] **22 Pilate answered, “What I have written, I have written.”**

**23 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments** [David Guzik: He let go of absolutely everything—even His clothes—becoming completely poor for us (see 2 Corinthians 8:9), so we could become completely rich in Him.] **and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic** [the undergarment]. **Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece** [David Guzik: Jesus’ seamless tunic reminds us of His role as our great High Priest, because Exodus 28:31-32 tells us that the High Priest wore a seamless garment]. **24 They said therefore among themselves, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be,”** that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says: **“They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.”** [Psalm 22:18—written over a **thousand** years before Jesus Christ walked the earth] **Therefore the soldiers did these things.**

### Behold Your Mother

**25 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas** [Jesus’ mom’s sister Mary], **and Mary Magdalene** [the ‘Magdalene’ was not part of her proper name, it just denoted where she was from—Magdala]. **26 When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, “Woman, behold your son!” 27 Then He said to the disciple, “Behold your mother!”** And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home [‘Home’ is an added word for clarity—it does not mean they left Jesus right then, it means that John took responsibility for Mary right then. In case you are wondering where Joseph (Jesus’ earthly father) was, he was probably dead by this time—hence the reason that Mary needed someone to watch her].

### It Is Finished

**28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, “I thirst!” 29 Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop** [the plant that was used in the original Passover to sprinkle the blood around the door], **and put it to His mouth. 30 So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished** [**tetelestai**]: Used to show that the debt of a bill had been paid; used by artists to show a work was complete; used by builders to show a building was finished according to plan. Jesus is saying He had done everything that He was supposed to do. At this point, Jesus had reconciled God and man. The

perfect once-for-all sacrifice had been made. **Love** had won the day. There is still a need for the resurrection, however, because Jesus had not yet conquered death. **Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures: A cry of victory in the hour of defeat!**" **And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit** [not the Holy Spirit, but the spirit that was in Jesus (just like we have a spirit, He had a spirit)].

### Jesus' Side Is Pierced

**31 Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. 32 Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. 33 But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. 34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out** [Crucifixion was intended to be a slow and painful way to die. Death itself would come by **suffocation**. The criminal would suffocate to death while trying to breathe. Breaking the legs would prohibit the criminal from pushing upward with his legs to get a breath. Jesus was already dead when the Roman soldiers broke the legs of the robbers, and the spear showed that He died of a broken **heart** (the only medical way that blood and water come out at the same time). Jesus did not even die the way the Romans wanted Him to die.]. **35 And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. 36 For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, "Not one of His bones shall be broken."** [Fulfillment of **Exodus 12:46**] **37 And again another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced."** [Fulfillment of **Zechariah 12:10**]

### Jesus Buried in Joseph's Tomb

**38 After this, Joseph of Arimathea** [a member of the Sanhedrin], **being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus** [**David Guzik: Customarily, the bodies of crucified criminals were left on their crosses to rot or be eaten by wild animals. But the Jews wanted no such horror displayed during the Passover season, and Romans were known to grant the corpses of executed men to friends or relatives for proper burial.**]; **and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. 39 And Nicodemus** [a member of the Sanhedrin], **who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. 40 Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. 41 Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. 42 So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews' Preparation Day, for the tomb was nearby.**

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. God may not do what you **expect** Him to do
2. God will still accomplish His plan
3. Jesus' death reconciled **man** to God

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Do not hold God accountable for things He did not promise you
2. Willingly allow God to use you to accomplish His plan
3. **Share** God's good news of love with others to make a difference in their lives

# The Final Days of Jesus: The Resurrection

---

## Preview: God's Love Wins

Last week, we looked at the idea that the cross proved that Jesus wins over sin—He was the perfect, once-for-all sacrifice that the entire Old Testament looked forward to. This week, we step into the reality that the disciples had fled, the Master had been killed, and the enemy appeared to have won. But, like so many other times in the Bible, the story is not yet finished because Jesus Christ has yet to prove that God's love not only wins over sin, but it wins over the ultimate effect of sin as well: death.

Key thought: The resurrection proves that God's love wins over **death**

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): John 20-21 (Author = John)

### John 20

#### The Empty Tomb

**1 Now the first day of the week** [Sunday] **Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb** [It is amazing what you find when you show up early, isn't it?]. **2 Then she ran** [notice the urgency she has because she has a problem and her problem is that she does not know **who** took Jesus] **and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved** [John], **and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him."** [She got her pronouns wrong—not, 'they,' but, 'He']

**3 Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. 4 So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. 5 And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there** [a subtle hint that this was not a grave robber]; **yet he did not go in** [hesitation]. **6 Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb** [boldness]; **and he saw the linen cloths lying there, 7 and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself** [you fold a napkin when you are coming back to the table]. **8 Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed** [John did not write the day he was saved in the flyleaf of his Bible—he wrote it in the Bible. John was the first to believe the resurrection without **seeing** Jesus.]. **9 For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead** [the first time a sacrifice had ever been killed and then came back to life]. **10 Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.**

#### Mary Magdalene Sees the Risen Lord

**11 But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping** [Psalm 126:5], **and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. 12 And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain** [I love the past tense—sometimes, tenses make all of the difference]. **13 Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?"**

**She said to them** [David Guzik: This is one of the few places in the Bible where someone encounters angels and they are not stricken with fear. It shows that Mary was so grieved at the loss of Jesus that

she was unaffected even by an appearance of angels.], “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.” [Prayer: Father, help us to weep when we cannot find you]

**14 Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there** [If you passionately seek Him, you will find Him—always], **and did not know that it was Jesus** [He continues to be an **unexpected** God]. **15 Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?”**

She, supposing Him to be the gardener [see the gardening link between the first Adam and Jesus?], **said to Him, “Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away.”** [Tenney: Her words reveal her devotion. She never paused to consider how she would carry the corpse of a full-grown man or how she would explain her possession of it.] **16 Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to Him, “Rabboni!” (which is to say, Teacher).** [I hope you know the voice of the Lord well enough to know when He is calling your name—there is nothing like it—to know that the Master and Maker of the Universe is speaking to you]

**17 Jesus said to her, “Do not cling to Me** [the Greek implies that Mary was already holding on and Jesus was telling her to stop clinging], **for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren** [Go to who? “My brethren.” Not, “Go to those slackers who left me.” Not, “Go to those bums that ran away.” But, “Go to My brethren.” Prayer: Thank you Lord for your swift and thorough forgiveness.] **and say to them** [David Guzik: The fact that Jesus makes a woman the first witness of His resurrection is significant. The law courts of that day would not recognize the testimony of a woman, but Jesus did.], **‘I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.’”**

**18 Mary Magdalene came** [not ran, but came—she had the answer to her problem: His name was **Jesus**] **and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her.**

### The Apostles Commissioned

**19 Then, the same day at evening** [Sunday night], **being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews** [they were hiding in fear], **Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, “Peace be with you.”** **20 When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord** [Ya think?].

**21 So Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you!** [Jesus had just completed on the cross the work that would bring peace to God and man, so no doubt He had **peace** on His mind] **As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.”** **22 And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”** [At this point, they have believed (because they saw), they have been commissioned (because He said), and they have been empowered (because of the Holy Spirit). I give you the apostles.]

### Seeing and Believing

**24 Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 The other disciples therefore said to him, “We have seen the Lord.”** [They are telling people about Jesus!]



So he said to them, “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.” [Do you blame Thomas?]

**26 And after eight days** [the next Sunday—on the eighth day] **His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, “Peace to you!”** [Jesus is staying on message] **27 Then He said to Thomas, “Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand *here*, and put *it* into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.”** [Jesus gave Thomas a **chance** to believe. We must not blame those that do not believe—we must give chances to believe.] **28 And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!”** [Thomas gets it—and then Thomas takes the Gospel to **India** and serves there for the remainder of his life. And Jesus accepts Thomas’ statement—because Jesus IS the Lord and because Jesus IS God.]

**29 Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed *are* those who have not seen and yet have believed.”** [This is us! This is us! Jesus says we are blessed too! And we are.]

David Guzik: The faith of Thomas is the climax of the book: Jesus has triumphed over sickness, sin, evil men, death and sorrow; now He conquers unbelief. Thomas is a good example in many ways. He refused to say he understood when he didn't, he refused to pretend to believe when he didn't. And when he did understand and believe, he went all the way and properly called Jesus Lord and God.

### That You May Believe

**30 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.** [Ever wonder why we have some stories and not others? It is so we would believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that we might have life.]

## John 21

### Breakfast by the Sea

**1 After these things Jesus showed Himself again** [Jesus is doing this so there is no doubt that He rose from the dead (and to encourage)] **to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed Himself: 2 Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. 3 Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.”** [What? Do not go back to the old life. The old life was fishing for fish. The new life is fishing for men.]

**They said to him, “We are going with you also.”** [Sometimes your **decisions** will spread to others—be strong in the face of fear] **They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing. 4 But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. 5 Then Jesus said to them, “Children, have you any food?”**

**They answered Him, “No.”**

**6 And He said to them, “Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find *some*.”** [Plummer: There is no need to seek symbolical meanings for the right and left side. The difference is not between

right and left, but between working with and without Divine guidance.] So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish.

**7** Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” [Busted] Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on *his* outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea [The last time Jesus showed up on the water, Peter walked on it, so maybe he was remembering back to that day]. **8** But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish. **9** Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread [Where did Jesus get the fish and bread?]. **10** Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish which you have just caught.”

**11** Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three [Why 153 fish?]; and although there were so many, the net was not broken [The good news of Jesus Christ is strong enough for a large haul—many philosophies or religions do not work if taken to their logical end, but Christianity works exceptionally well]. **12** Jesus said to them, “Come *and* eat breakfast.” Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, “Who are You?”—knowing that it was the Lord. **13** Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish. [There is no judgment here—just breakfast amongst brothers. This is the last recorded meal of Jesus in the Bible.]

**14** This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead.

### Jesus Restores Peter

**15** So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, *son of Jonah*, do you love [*agape*] Me more than these?” [More than these fish OR more than these disciples? Either is a question that needed to be asked because Simon Peter went back to fishing for fish and not fishing for men AND Simon Peter said he loved Jesus more than anyone else.]

He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love [*phileo*] You.”

He said to him, “Feed [*bosko*; an imperative meaning tending to the spiritual needs] My lambs [little lambs].”

**16** He said to him again a second time, “Simon, *son of Jonah*, do you love [*agape*] Me?”

He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love [*phileo*] You.”

He said to him, “Tend [*poimaino*; an imperative meaning to shepherd] My sheep [any four-footed animal].”

**17** He said to him the third time, “Simon, *son of Jonah*, do you love [*phileo*] Me?” Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, “Do you love Me?” [Peter denied Christ three times and these three questions undoubtedly reminded Peter of those denials]

And he said to Him, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love [*phileo*] You.”



Jesus said to him, “Feed [bosko; an imperative meaning tending to the spiritual needs] My sheep [any four-footed animal]. 18 Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.” 19 This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, “Follow Me.” [And Peter did—read the book of Acts to see what Peter did with the Gospel. Peter was crucified for Christ at the end of his life. What mattered in Peter’s life was not the three denials before the cross, it was not the fact that he ran at the crucifixion, or the fact that he was always being bold and brash. What mattered in Peter’s life was that he finished well. Peter’s story was not yet over and Jesus was telling Peter that Peter still had time to finish well. Your story is not yet over. You still have time to finish well.]

### The Beloved Disciple and His Book

20 Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, “Lord, who is the one who betrays You?” 21 Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, “But Lord, what about this man?” [Just like when walking on water, Peter took his eyes off of Jesus and he starts to sink]

22 Jesus said to him, “If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me.” [If we keep our eyes on Jesus, others’ obedience is irrelevant]

23 Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, “If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you?”

24 This is the disciple [referring to John 21:20—this is how we know John was ‘the disciple Jesus loved’] who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true.

25 And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. The resurrection happened
2. The disciples believed
3. God’s love wins

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Spread the word about the resurrection—every generation has to be told
2. Continue to believe—salvation is not a one-time event—it is a continual state of being saved and becoming more and more like Jesus Christ
3. Celebrate that our God’s love wins over sin, death, and unbelief!

# The Final Days of Jesus: The Ascension

---

## Preview: So Long . . . (for now)

After his resurrection, Jesus communicated two important realities about his kingdom to his disciples. The first was about empowerment. The disciples would not be able to fulfill their mission (**Matthew 28:18-20**) on their own. They needed his presence and power. That is why he promised the Holy Spirit. The second was about witnessing. The reason for the power was to communicate a message (**Acts 1:8**).

Key thought: Jesus' presence and power are still with us

**R. C. Sproul: The book of Acts is the bridge between Jesus' steps here on earth and the lives of the disciple's after His leaving.** Understand that Christ had done everything He could to prepare the Apostles for this predicted event and is now going to impart His final instructions to them.

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Acts 1:1-11 (Author = Luke)

### Prologue

**1 The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 2 until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen,**

Theophilus? Both of Luke's books are addressed to this person. **R. C. Sproul: Theophilus literally means, "one who loves God," or "one who is loved by God."** Luke begins this book by reminding Theophilus of his previous book about Jesus' life and earthly ministry. Luke continues his thought by placing a timestamp on when this is occurring, careful to mention the expectations that had been set. These include events that occurred throughout the gospels until Christ's ascension.

**3 to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.**

Jesus is **risen**. He is **risen** indeed! Here are a few of the events/proofs that occurred and the references:

- He **presented** Himself: **John 20:19: Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you."**
- He gave **convincing** proofs: **Luke 24:39: Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.**
- He **ate** with them: **Luke 24:41-43: 41 But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, "Have you any food here?" 42 So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. 43 And He took it and ate in their presence.**

## The Holy Spirit Promised

**4 And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” *He said*, “you have heard from Me; 5 for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”**

The coming **promise**: When was this going to happen? It was going to happen after they had waited for several days in Jerusalem. Understand, there is currently much fear and there is a purge occurring of the Jesus freaks by the Jewish leaders. Although they were probably fearful and dealing with a variety of emotions, having the risen Savior tell you to wait would be such an encouragement and would probably give them the guts to stick it out. He had after-all, conquered death! At the same time, Christ is so patient with these Apostles and lays out what they should expect in the coming days and points straight to an event they could put their thoughts around and find great peace. Now, let me ask you, what event began Jesus' earthly ministry? It was His water baptism. What event began the Apostles' ministry? Spiritual baptism! What is the beginning of our walk with Christ? Yes, it is our spiritual baptism into the family of God. Maybe the disciples were taken back to the early days of Christ's ministry and the excitement that took place at His baptism. At the same time, I could not help but think about Christ and His encounter with a man named Nicodemus in **John 3:3-6: 3 Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” 4 Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?” 5 Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.**

Jesus had shared with this learned man the simple facts of how someone can be saved. These same truths still hold true today in the life of a believer. Now, the preparations have been made and God's team is getting ready to change the world for all eternity! Are you in the game?

**6 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”**

Not the **earthly** kingdom again! I can only imagine what the Lord must have thought at that moment and how He may have felt knowing that they were still confused about His kingdom. I wonder if there were still remnants of the argument that took place in **Luke 22:24-30: 24 Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest. 25 And He said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called ‘benefactors.’ 26 But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. 27 For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves. 28 “But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. 29 And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, 30 that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”** The habit was hard to break. They so much wanted to see the physical kingdom put in place right then.

**7 And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. 8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."**

Stop acting like **grownups**. As adults, we often have a worldview that goes totally against what our Heavenly Father prefers from us. In these verses, Christ in His infinite wisdom and patience knows that the Apostles still do not understand what is going on. He knows they are looking for the prophesied establishment of His earthly kingdom and as mentioned in the above verses (and their positions in it).

**Paul E Miller: On more than one occasion, Jesus tells his disciples to become like little children. The most famous is when the young mothers try to get near Jesus so he can bless their infants. When the disciples block them, Jesus rebukes his disciples sharply. Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it (Mark 10:14b-15). (A Praying Life)** As children, we look to our parents for guidance and trust them when things go awry and life is totally out of control. Children, in most instances, just need someone to hold them and reassure them that everything is going to be all right.

Christ is quick to encourage these same disciples by letting them know that although they are weak, He is strong and the one He is sending is strong. So strong that miraculous and unfathomable events are going to occur. This handful of scared Apostles is now going to become a force taking a message not just to Jerusalem but to the end of the earth as well.

### **Jesus Ascends to Heaven**

**9 Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.**

Our gravity-defying Savior! This is the same God/Man that came to this planet in the lowliest manner, a Child born in a manger. Growing up as the Son of a carpenter, eventually paying the ultimate price as the sacrificial Lamb on the cross. Is it just me or is this not a fitting exit for our Savior? In the same book mentioned above, Paul E. Miller shares an experience of witnessing the Space Shuttle launch he had growing up in Florida. Since I grew up there as well, I shared this same experience and will borrow from this same illustration. **I will never forget being at the Kennedy Space Center on April 4, 1983, and witnessing the first launch of the Challenger Space Shuttle. It was one of the most fantastic things I have ever witnessed. Understand, I had seen multiple launches from a distance. I was less than 1 mile from the launch pad for this event. I will never forget the sky getting bright as the engines ignited and then seeing the smoke coming out the sound was phenomenal and the ground began shaking. I was simply awesome. The vehicle began to rise and our eyes followed its progress. When I say we followed its progress, I mean we watched it until it was such a small dot I began questioning if it was still there. I can only imagine how these Apostles watched in wonder as their leader, and friend began His ascent. He had left them once in death and now to witness His departure in life must have been almost more than they could take.**

**10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, 11 who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."**

Men in **white**. They continued to stare at the heavens. Maybe they were like me at the Challenger launch, trying to determine if that Little Dot was still there or had it finally disappeared. Why do you think these men appeared? Who were they? Personally, I don't know the full answers to these questions but I tend to agree with most theologians that they were Angelic beings. Maybe they came to calm and help refocus the Apostles back to what Christ had told them earlier. Since the day this event occurred, Christians have been watching the sky, looking for our Lord's expectant return. I recall very early in my marriage, taking trips to Grandma Williams' home. This is Mila's grandmother and she lived in the small town of Van Wert, Ohio. She was such an encouragement to us and would occasionally send us handwritten cards. She never failed to write her life verse beneath her signature. That verse happens to be **Titus 2:13: Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.**

Challenge: Pray patiently. Wait prayerfully. Then go.

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. **Truth** (Pastor Gary: The Apostles would not die for a cause but they would die for the truth)
2. You "shall" be witnesses
3. Christ's imminent return

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Is Christ personal to **me**? How?
2. Am I fulfilling Christ's final earthly command?
3. Do I have faith like a **child**?

# The Essential 100

---

## A Bible overview plan for 2011-2012

The Essential 100 (E100) is a systematic approach that guides readers through the big picture of the Bible. It is a carefully selected list of short Bible passages—50 from the Old Testament and 50 from the New Testament. Each testament is broken up into ten, five-week series. We will move from Old to New Testaments every five weeks. My goal is to teach three of the five lessons in every series.

The E100 in Sunday school: We will REAP (read, explain, apply, and personalize) one passage each week and finish a series every five weeks. Each lesson will include a key verse for memorization. At the end of two years, we will have covered the essential 100 passages in the Bible.

Additional information: To learn more about The E100 program and to obtain additional resources, visit [e100challenge.com](http://e100challenge.com). Our Sunday school website is [stuartheights.org/sundayschool](http://stuartheights.org/sundayschool).

## The Schedule: The Church is Born

This is our fifth five-week series in the New Testament. So far, we have looked at The Early Years of Jesus, The Teachings of Jesus, the Miracles of Jesus, and The Final Days of Jesus.

Date	Lesson	Key Verse(s)	Passage	Speaker
November 20	The Day of Pentecost	Acts 2:1-4	Acts 2	Jim Fleming
November 27	Growth and Persecution	Acts 4:1-4	Acts 3-4	Lori Drake
December 4	The First Martyr	Acts 7:59-60	Acts 6:8-8:8	Jim Fleming
December 11	Sharing the Word	Acts 8:34-35	Acts 8:26-40	Terry Bolden
December 18	Good News for All	Acts 10:34-35	Acts 10:1-11:18	Jim Fleming

# The Church is Born: The Day of Pentecost

---

## Review: Pentecost

Pentecost is rooted in the Old Testament and means the **50<sup>th</sup>** day. **David Guzik: The Day of Pentecost was a Jewish feast held fifty days after Passover. It was a time to celebrate the firstfruits of the harvest.** Jews call it the Festival of Weeks or Shavuot. It occurs in late May or early June.

## Preview: A Messy Start

When we think of church, we typically think of a structured worship service with an order of worship. However, the first, 'church service,' involved flaming tongues, miracles, a long sermon by a first-time preacher, no songs, a confused audience, and 3,000 conversions. I love the way God starts things.

Key thought: We are partners with God in the advancement of the Gospel

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Acts 2 (Author = Luke)

### Coming of the Holy Spirit

**1 When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all** [Acts 1:15 says that this group comprised about 120 people: the disciples, Jesus' mother Mary, Jesus' brothers, the women that followed and supported Jesus in His ministry, and others] **with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire** [this reminds me of John the Baptist's prophecy in Matthew 3:11], **and one sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues** [languages], **as the Spirit gave them utterance.**

### The Crowd's Response

**5 And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. 6 And when this sound occurred** [the rushing wind sound was loud enough for many to hear], **the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language** [the original text gives **no** room for new languages, unknown languages, or prayer languages]. **7 Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? [Longenecker: Galileans had difficulty pronouncing gutturals and had the habit of swallowing syllables when speaking; so they were looked down upon by the people of Jerusalem as being provincial.] 8 And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God." 12 So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?" 13 Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine."** [The early church's first impression: **drunkenness**]

### Peter's Sermon

**14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them** [Stop and see the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ—it can take a hasty and rash man like Simon Peter and turn him into a preacher of the Gospel. The great gift on this day was the Holy Spirit—not the gift of languages. The Holy Spirit **changes** things.], **"Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. [David Guzik: On the Day of Pentecost, Peter didn't teach as the rabbis in his day usually did. They would gather disciples around them, sit down, and instruct them and any others who might listen. Instead, Peter proclaimed the truth like a herald.] 15 For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day** [9 am (Spanglish reference)]. **16 But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:**

**17 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God,  
That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; [David Guzik: Before, the Holy Spirit was given in **drops**, now He would be poured forth.]  
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,**

Your young men shall see visions,  
Your old men shall dream dreams.

**18** And on My menservants and on My maidservants  
I will pour out My Spirit in those days;  
And they shall prophesy.

**19** I will show wonders in heaven above  
And signs in the earth beneath:  
Blood and fire and vapor of smoke.

**20** The sun shall be turned into darkness,  
And the moon into blood,  
Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.

**21** And it shall come to pass  
That whoever calls on the name of the LORD  
Shall be saved.' [Joel 2:28-32—Peter makes Joel's words about Jesus]

[Peter now shifts gears and gets to the main point of this sermon: **Jesus Christ**] **22** "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know — **23** Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; **24** whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. **25** For David says concerning Him:

*'I foresaw the LORD always before my face,  
For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.*

**26** Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad;  
Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope.

**27** For You will not leave my soul in Hades,  
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

**28** You have made known to me the ways of life;  
You will make me full of joy in Your presence.' [Psalm 16:8-11—Peter makes David's words about Jesus]

**29** "Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead [Gospel part 1: **death**] and buried [Gospel part 2: **burial**], and his tomb is with us to this day. **30** Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, **31** he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. **32** This Jesus God has raised up [Gospel part 3: **resurrection**], of which we are all witnesses [post-Gospel need 1: **witnesses**]. **33** Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear [post-Gospel need 2: **evidence**].

**34** "For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself:



*'The LORD said to my Lord,  
"Sit at My right hand,*

**35 Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."** [Psalm 110:1—Peter again makes David's words about Jesus]

**36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."**

**37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart** [they realized they were **guilty**], **and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"** [David Guzik: It is fascinating to see what an incredible work of the Holy Spirit happened here. Peter offered absolutely no invitation, merely a declaration of truth, but the listeners themselves gave the invitation! The miracle of languages merely opened the door for the preaching of the Gospel—the focus is not on the miracle of the languages, it is on the miracle of the Holy Spirit and the power of the Gospel.]

**38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call** [that is us]."

### A Vital Church Grows

**40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation."** [Observations about this first sermon: (1) **Multiple** Scripture texts were used, (2) Great boldness was shown, (3) It was interactive, and (4) It was **long**] **41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them** [Remember back to the story of the giving of the Law when Moses came down the mountain: 3,000 died that day due to the rebellion associated with the Golden Calf—this is the same God, but He is using a different method of engagement (shekhinah glory vs Holy Spirit) and is drawing men to Him]. **42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine** [teaching] **and fellowship** [living], **in the breaking of bread** [remembering], **and in prayers** [praying]. **43 Then fear came upon every soul** [fearing], **and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. 44 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, 45 and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need** [sharing/giving].

**46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple** [worshiping], **and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church** [growing] **daily** [the **Gospel** is for every day of the week] **those who were being saved.**

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. **Jesus** provides the salvation
2. The **Spirit** provides the power
3. The **church** provides the witnesses and the evidence

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Tell people about Jesus' provision
2. Be filled with the Holy Spirit
3. Be a witness and the evidence of the Gospel

# The Church is Born: Growth and Persecution

---

## Preview: The Name

We all have names. Our names serve as identification. In the Jewish faith, names reveal insight into a person's nature, attributes, or ancestry. Names are often chosen based on their meanings: Isaac (laughter), Esau (hairy), and Jacob (supplanter).

There are times when we claim that our names have worth. If I tell someone to go to a store that I frequently shop at, and say, "Tell them that Lori sent you," my assumption is that mentioning my name will reap some reward: a discount or a free item. Typically it just means that the checkout person will say, "Oh yeah, I know her," and go on her merry way, but my delusion remains—that my name is worth something. I believe that merely saying my name can accomplish something good.

There is a name that truly does have worth. A name that is, "**above every name.**" It carries with it ultimate authority. It is authority. It can be said that Scripture is true or that it is truth. It can be said that God is loving, or that He is love. Jesus' name does not merely have authority—it is authority.

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Acts 3-4 (Author = Luke)

### Acts 3

#### A Lam Man Healed

**1 Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour** [3 pm—9 hours from sunrise]. **2 And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful** [made of, "fine Corinthian brass," other temples were typically silver and gold], **to ask alms** [donation to the poor] **from those who entered the temple;** **3 who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms** [in the mperfect tense, meaning this was repeatedly asked; what he truly needed, money could not buy: **salvation** and **healing**]. **4 And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, "Look at us."** **5 So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them** [What was he expecting to receive? Money]. **6 Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."** **7 And he** [Peter] **took him by the right hand and lifted him up** [demonstrates how confident Peter was that healing would take place], **and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.** **8 So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God.** **9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God.** **10 Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.**

### The (Lame) Man in the Mirror

Lame Man	Your Name Here
Lame from the womb	Born into a <b>sinful</b> nature ( <b>Romans 3:23</b> ) (when we are born, we know nothing but sin)
Outside the temple	<b>Separated</b> from God ( <b>Romans 6:23</b> )
Gift of <b>healing</b> * (he knew he needed this)	Gift of salvation ( <b>Romans 6:23b</b> )
<b>Healed</b> by grace (he did not know he needed this)	<b>Saved</b> by grace ( <b>Ephesians 2:8</b> )
Public profession*	Public profession*

\*healing: the man asked for money, not healing. **How often do we think we know what we need, and get frustrated with God that we do not receive it?**

\*Lame = leaping, walking, jumping, going into the temple; Me = baptism/Communion/church involvement

### Preaching in Solomon's Portico

**11 Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed. 12 So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people** [spiritual light bulb went off!]: **"Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? 13 The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob** [His audience was Jewish], **the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. 14 But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer [What murderer? Barabbas] to be granted to you, 15 and killed the Prince of life** [play on words?], **whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses.** [Peter's message is **convicting**. They needed to realize what they had done, in order to realize what they needed. You do not seek treatment until you know you are sick. The knowledge of sin comes before the blessing of redemption.] **16 And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all** [I got **nothing**].

**17 "Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance** [*agnoia* = lack of knowledge, especially of divine things; moral blindness], **as did also your rulers [Luke 23:34b: Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.** A sin done in ignorance is still a sin]. **18 But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.** [**Warren Wiersbe: The prophets had foretold the sufferings and death of the Messiah, and the nation fulfilled these prophecies without realizing what they were doing. When God cannot rule, He overrules and always accomplishes His divine purposes and decrees.**] **19 Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out** [individual repentance], **so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord** [national repentance yielding the return of Christ], **20 and that He may send Jesus Christ, who**

was preached to you before, **21** whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things [millennial kingdom], which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. **22** For Moses truly said to the fathers, *'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you.'* **23** And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.' [Deuteronomy 18: Moses was thought of by Jews to be the greatest prophet. A prophet, "like Moses," would be the Messiah. Not only did they not hear Him, they crucified Him!] **24** Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. **25** You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, *'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'* [You, of all people, should not have missed this!] **26** To you first [the Jews], God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities." [Peter brings it back to a personal message of repentance for each individual: trusting in Jesus and turning away from iniquity]

We have focused on the lame man and the audience, but now let us look at Peter and John. As they are going to the temple, they notice, speak to, and eventually heal an undeserving man. They perform this miracle in the name of Jesus, taking no credit for themselves. They continue into the temple with the healed man in tow. Next, Peter throws down a sermon, which yields a couple thousand converts. Peter and John have demonstrated willingness, boldness, obedience, and humility. **Peter and John followed the Lord in full obedience. So what would you expect to happen next? What do we as believers expect to happen when we do something, "for the Lord"? Good results? Praise? Blessing? On some level, don't we usually expect some sort of, "atta boy," from God when we do something for the sake of the gospel, or for the sake of His Name?** Yes, but a major shift in the narrative occurs here: persecution instead of blessing.

## Acts 4

### Peter and John Arrested

**1** Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple [magistrate], and the Sadducees [a group that did not believe in the resurrection of the dead] came upon them, **2** being greatly disturbed [grieved, annoyed, troubled, displeased, worked up] that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. **3** And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. [It was against Jewish law to have trials at night. Brian Smith: Do either of those contexts determine the character of God? Because God is just as good, and just as gracious, and just as merciful and just as holy and just as all the things we proclaim Him to be when we celebrate His good things and He's all of those things when trial comes. . . . He is still who He is. Our circumstance does not dictate the character and the nature of God.] **4** However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand [the church continues to grow: 3,000 at Pentecost; 2,000 after healing of the lame man].

### Addressing the Sanhedrin

**5** And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, elders, and scribes [the Sanhedrin: 71 members, the "Supreme Court"], **6** as well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander,

**and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem** [Peter and John were standing trial before the **Sanhedrin**—the very council who had previously condemned Jesus to death. Peter and John knew the potential consequences.]. **7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked** [imperfect tense], **“By what power or by what name have you done this?”**

**8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: 9 If we this day are judged for a good deed *done* to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, 10 let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. 11 This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.’ [Psalm 118:22] 12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved** [the same word used for “made well” in Acts 4:9 is used for “must be saved” in Acts 4:12: **sozo**: The name of Jesus can easily provide both physical and spiritual healing].”

### The Name of Jesus Forbidden

**13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus. 14 And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it** [Denying the miracle meant denying the healed man; Affirming the miracle meant affirming the message]. **15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves** [How did Luke know about the Sanhedrin’s private conversations? Peter and John were preaching to Saul/Paul.], **16 saying, “What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them *is* evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny *it*. 17 But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name** [Hindsight show us that the “threats” merely spurred the apostles on].”

**18 So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. 20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.” 21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them, because of the people, since they all glorified God for what had been done** [they could try and silence Peter and John, but they could not silence the crowd]. **22 For the man was over forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.**

### Prayer for Boldness

**23 And being let go, they went to their own *companions* and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. 24 So when they heard that, they raised their voice** [singular] **to God with one accord** [Music/Sing Off: Multiple voices combining in matching pitch and tone. The **harmony** of the church results from (relies on, is made perfect by, depends on, thrives on, has to have) . . . the influence of (direction of, presence of, indwelling of) . . . the Holy Spirit. When we do not have the Holy Spirit, it sounds like chaos, but He makes our chaos harmonious.] **and said: “Lord, You *are* God, who made**

heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, **25** who by the mouth of Your servant David have said:

**'Why did the nations rage,  
And the people plot vain things?  
26 The kings of the earth took their stand,  
And the rulers were gathered together  
Against the LORD and against His Christ.'** [Psalm 2]

**27 "For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together 28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. [Guzik: Because they saw their circumstances in light of God's Word, they could recognize that the wrath of man never operated outside of the sphere of God's control. Scripture's prophecy brought the comfort of God's sovereignty. This was a comfort to the early church.]29 Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word [In other words, "Bring it on!"], 30 by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus."** [Signs and wonders can get attention, but the Word of God saves. Peter still had to preach the Gospel even though the lame man was healed.]

**31 And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.**

### Sharing in All Things

**32 Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common [People > Possessions]. 33 And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. 34 Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, 35 and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.** [This scenario of radical giving is unique to the early church, where many new converts were out of towners and now homeless. The sharing and giving did eventually get out of hand, resulting in poverty later on in the church. Paul's epistles laid out giving parameters to protect the people and the church.]

**36 And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, 37 having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.** [A spirit of giving and generosity should be evident of God's people to a watching world]

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. God wants to use my **testimony**
2. God wants to use my **voice**
3. God wants to use my **church**

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Know it
2. Speak it
3. Live it

# The Church is Born: The First Martyr

---

## Review

So far in our study of **Acts**, Peter preached a sermon and 3,000 people were saved, persecution arises, Peter preaches another sermon and 2,000 more people are saved, and more persecution arises.

A small segment of Scripture that we did not cover is in **Acts 6** where the apostles set aside men to help them serve all of the new believers (Christianity went from 120 people to 5,120 people in a matter of a few weeks and tactically, the apostles needed help).

One of the men they chose to help was a man named Stephen. Today's text most likely occurs just a few months after the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

## Preview: More Sermons?

For some reason, God loves to work through **sermons**. In the early church, this vehicle was used powerfully by the Holy Spirit to convict men and women of sin and build the kingdom. In today's text, we see a different reaction to a sermon, though, in that the one delivering the sermon is killed for his faith—Stephen becomes the church's **first** martyr.

Key thought: God's Word + Holy Spirit = great power

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Acts 6:8-8:8 (Author = Luke)

### Acts 6

#### Stephen Accused of Blasphemy

**8 And Stephen, full of faith and power** [do not miss the importance of this phrase as it is the underpinning for the entire text today], **did great wonders and signs among the people.** **9 Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen** [Roman Jews who hung around after being freed] **(Cyrenians, Alexandrians [Egyptians], and those from Cilicia [where Saul/Paul was from] and Asia [modern-day Turkey]), disputing with Stephen.** **10 And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke** [the **Spirit** was the reason for the irresistibility, not Stephen's brilliance—the same is true today]. **11 Then they secretly induced men to say** [like last week, Luke may have known this because of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit or because Saul/Paul may have been one of those men; additionally, notice how many parallels there are between Jesus' life and Stephen's life], **"We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God."** **12 And they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; and they came upon him, seized him, and brought him to the council.** **13 They also set up false witnesses who said, "This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law; 14 for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us."** **15 And all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel** [the Greek word for angel means messenger, which is exactly what Stephen was—a messenger].



## Acts 7

### Stephen's Address: The Call of Abraham

**1** Then the high priest said, "Are these things so?" [This appears to be a yes/no question, but Stephen responds with **1,236** words. Stephen was ready to talk about Jesus. When listening to this sermon, do not focus on the actions of the leaders, focus on the following three things: (1) God's faithfulness, (2) Israel's rejections, and (3) the overall actions of the nation of Israel, because that is where Stephen is going with the history lesson.]

**2** And he said, "Brethren and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, **3** and said to him, '*Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.*' **4** Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, He moved him to this land in which you now dwell. **5** And God gave him no inheritance in it, not even *enough* to set his foot on. But even when Abraham had no child, He promised to give it to him for a possession, and to his descendants after him. **6** But God spoke in this way: that his descendants would dwell in a foreign land, and that they would bring them into bondage and oppress *them* four hundred years. **7** '*And the nation to whom they will be in bondage I will judge,*' said God, '*and after that they shall come out and serve Me in this place.*' **8** Then He gave him the covenant of circumcision; and so Abraham begot Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day; and Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot the twelve patriarchs.

### The Patriarchs in Egypt

**9** "And the patriarchs, becoming envious, sold Joseph into Egypt. But God was with him **10** and delivered him out of all his troubles, and gave him favor and wisdom in the presence of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house. **11** Now a famine and great trouble came over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and our fathers found no sustenance. **12** But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first. **13** And the second *time* Joseph was made known to his brothers, and Joseph's family became known to the Pharaoh. **14** Then Joseph sent and called his father Jacob and all his relatives to *him*, seventy-five people. **15** So Jacob went down to Egypt; and he died, he and our fathers. **16** And they were carried back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham bought for a sum of money from the sons of Hamor, *the father* of Shechem.

### God Delivers Israel by Moses

**17** "But when the time of the promise drew near which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt **18** till another king arose who did not know Joseph. **19** This man dealt treacherously with our people, and oppressed our forefathers, making them expose their babies, so that they might not live. **20** At this time Moses was born, and was well pleasing to God; and he was brought up in his father's house for three months. **21** But when he was set out, Pharaoh's daughter took him away and brought him up as her own son. **22** And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds.

**23** "Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. **24** And seeing one of *them* suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and



struck down the Egyptian. **25** For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand. **26** And the next day he appeared to two of them as they were fighting, and *tried to reconcile them, saying, 'Men, you are brethren; why do you wrong one another?'* **27** But he who did his neighbor wrong pushed him away, saying, *'Who made you a ruler and a judge over us?'* **28** *Do you want to kill me as you did the Egyptian yesterday?'* **29** Then, at this saying, Moses fled and became a dweller in the land of Midian, where he had two sons.

**30** *"And when forty years had passed, an Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire in a bush, in the wilderness of Mount Sinai. **31** When Moses saw it, he marveled at the sight; and as he drew near to observe, the voice of the Lord came to him, **32** saying, 'I am the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'* And Moses trembled and dared not look. **33** *'Then the LORD said to him, "Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground. **34** I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt; I have heard their groaning and have come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send you to Egypt.'"*

**35** *"This Moses whom they rejected, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge?'* is the one God sent *to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the Angel who appeared to him in the bush. **36** He brought them out, after he had shown wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years.*

So far, Stephen is just recounting the **facts** and has really provided no commentary. That now changes.

### Israel Rebels Against God

**37** *"This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear.'* [Stephen is talking about **Jesus**]

**38** *"This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, the one who received the living oracles to give to us, **39** whom our fathers would not obey, but rejected. And in their hearts they turned back to Egypt, **40** saying to Aaron, 'Make us gods to go before us; as for this Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.'* **41** And they made a calf in those days, offered sacrifices to the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands [much like the modern-day Jews of that day were rejoicing in the temple and not the God of the temple]. **42** *Then God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the Prophets:*

*'Did you offer Me slaughtered animals and sacrifices during forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel?*

**43** *You also took up the tabernacle of Moloch,  
And the star of your god Remphan,  
Images which you made to worship;  
And I will carry you away beyond Babylon.'*

## God's True Tabernacle

**44** “Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as He appointed, instructing Moses to make it according to the pattern that he had seen, **45** which our fathers, having received it in turn, also brought with Joshua into the land possessed by the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers until the days of David, **46** who found favor before God and asked to find a dwelling for the God of Jacob. **47** But Solomon built Him a house.

**48** “However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says:

**49** *‘Heaven is My throne,  
And earth is My footstool.  
What house will you build for Me? says the LORD,  
Or what is the place of My rest?  
50 Has My hand not made all these things?’*

## Israel Resists the Holy Spirit

**51** “**You stiff-necked** [stubborn, headstrong, obstinate (reminds me of The Shawshank Redemption—“How can you be so obtuse?”)] **and uncircumcised in heart and ears!** [Stephen uses the same language that God uses to describe **Israel** in the Old Testament (see **Exodus 32:9**, **Jeremiah 9:26**, and **Deuteronomy 10:16**)] **You always resist** [to fall upon, run against, to be adverse, oppose, and strive against] **the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you** [remember, he is talking to the Jewish elite—the Sanhedrin]. **52 Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers** [How do you think the judge and jury are going to rule if you call them traitors and murderers? Not good for you], **53 who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it.”** [David Guzik: Stephen's message is essentially twofold. First, *God is no respecter of places*. That is, though the temple was a wonderful gift from God, it was wrong to overemphasize it as “the house of God.” Second, *Israel is guilty of what they have always been guilty of: Rejecting God's messengers.*]

## Stephen the Martyr

**54 When they heard these things they were cut to the heart** [this was an effective sermon, but only the Holy Spirit can cause man's words to cut someone to the heart], **and they gnashed** [bit him repeatedly] **at him with their teeth** [Where else in the Bible is gnashing of teeth mentioned?]. **55 But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, 56 and said, “Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing** [Why was Jesus standing and not sitting?] **at the right hand of God!”**

**57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord** [Notice the different use of, “**one accord**,” here than in the five prior times it has been used in **Acts**—the enemies of Christ rail against His servants with one accord, but we are to be in one accord with each other and God]; **58 and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul** [who later, after being converted, would be called **Paul**]. **59 And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my**

spirit.” **60 Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.** [David Guzik: If Stephen fell asleep, the church had to wake up. William Sanford LaSor: If there had been any rose-colored optimism about quickly winning the Jewish people to their Messiah, that was gone. The Church could not expect triumph without a bloody battle.]

## Acts 8

### Saul Persecutes the Church

**1 Now Saul** [Acts 7 ends and you might not be sure which side Saul is on. Acts 8 quickly clarifies that] **was consenting** [pleased with the outcome] **to his death.** [In Acts 26 when testifying before Agrippa, Paul says that he voted for the deaths of believers (Stephen may have been one of them)]

**At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.**

**3 As for Saul, he made havoc** [to affix a stigma to, to dishonor, spot, defile, to treat shamefully or with injury, to ravage, devastate, ruin] **of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.**

### Christ Is Preached in Samaria

**4 Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching** [technically this word does not mean preaching, it means evangelizing or spreading] **the word** [Tying this concept of spreading the Gospel back to Stephen’s sermon, listen to this quote by David Guzik: The whole idea behind a permanent, stationary temple is “you come to me.” This is why Israel, though they were a light to the nations, mainly thought in terms of the world coming to them for salvation. Through the church, God would show a different heart: “I will come to you,” including the Gentiles.]. **5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. 6 And the multitudes with one accord** [here it is again] **heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. 7 For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. 8 And there was great joy in that city.**

Here is the progression through this text: signs/wonders → persecution → preaching → conviction → martyrdom → persecution → preaching → miracles → healing → joy

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. God likes to use sermons
2. Persecution will come
3. It all ends in joy

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Be ready to hear sermons (what if we prepared to hear as much as the preacher prepared to deliver?)
2. Be ready to receive persecution
3. Be ready to experience joy

# The Church is Born: Sharing the Word

---

## Preview: Unsung Hero

In **Acts 8:26-40**, we have the story of Philip and the conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch. Philip was a **soul-winner**. He had a focus on God and God's calling on his life. This Philip is not the Apostle, but the deacon. He was called to be a deacon in this new concept called the church: called to serve tables. Serving tables is not a very noble calling, is it? God takes those who are faithful in the small things and often uses them to do great things in the eyes of men. It does not matter what you are doing, if you are doing it for the Lord, be faithful! **Hudson Taylor: Small things are small things, but faithfulness with a small thing is a big thing.** We just recently learned that Joshua was called to lead the children of Israel after forty years of serving as Moses' aide. One of his jobs during this time was to hold up physically the arms of Moses during a battle, because Moses was tired. Does that sound very glamorous? Maybe God will or will not call you to do something big. Regardless of what God is going to do, let me encourage you to be faithful (**Hebrews 11:6: But without faith it is impossible to please Him**). Being **faithful** is "big" in the eyes of God.

We have something from **Matthew 28** and **Mark 16** that we call the Great Commission. It is a command to go and preach the Gospel. The Great Commission is a call for all of us, not just those in the ministry. In this sense, we are all evangelists. By **Acts 8**, our friend Phil is an evangelist and through his teaching/preaching and many throughout Samaria are being saved, baptized, called, and churches are beginning throughout her villages. That means more spiritual leaders, more deacons, and more servants are being called and used. Phil's ministry is what we would call successful and thriving. Which of us does not want the **Acts 8:5-25** experience? We all want God to use us in a big way. In a very short time, Phil does not just have three campuses, but dozens. God is growing His church exponentially through the obedience of Phil. This is exciting stuff!

Key thought: Phillip effectively shows us how to **share** our faith

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Acts 8:26-40 (Author = Luke)

### Christ Is Preached to an Ethiopian

Then comes **Acts 8:26**. With all the excitement, activity, growth, salvations, and baptisms . . . **26 Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is desert.** [The Holy Spirit, through Luke's writing, does not want you to miss this. God calls Phil from the thriving, vibrant, growing ministry in a big metropolitan area to the backside of the desert. There is literally nothing on this road. I have been here. This area is pure desert. No towns. No people. Very little traffic. Not even any trees or vegetation. The Holy Spirit wants Phil to do what? Why? God does not always work the way we expect Him to. Phil is so successful. In our eyes yes, but Philip was successful in part because he was obedient and faithful. Without the humble attitude of obedience and faith, would, "Philip the deacon," have been, "Philip the evangelist?" Would, "Philip the church member," even have been, "Philip the deacon?" This is a testimony of how important it is to be obedient and faithful at cleaning tables, picking up trash, choir attendance, nursery duty,

parking lot security, Awanas, etc. I often wonder how many, “Philip the evangelists,” do we have in our midst? Potentially, this is every one of us! In **Acts 8:27**, we understand why Philip had many of the “successes” that he did.] **27 So he arose and went.** [It was just that simple to our friend Phil. No arguments. No complaints. No, “but God.” Did God’s plan make sense? Put yourselves in Phil’s sandals. From a limited, human perspective, this makes no sense. Wouldn’t Phil be able to reach more people, disciple more people, and grow God’s church faster, by staying in Samaria? But God said, “Go,” and Philip went. And you know what happened? Then, the backside of the desert, turned into a harvest field.] **And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, 28 was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet.** [This was just one man in the middle of nowhere. But God! Don’t you love those words? In his country, he might have been someone important, but outside his country this man would have been a nobody. Perhaps unimportant to most, but God has a heart for people (**2 Peter 3:9: The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance**). Philip had the same heart. That is why he was there. That should be a challenge to each of us. Do we have the heart of God? The heart of a soul-winner? Because God love people enough to send His Son to die for them and us. Now in our story, we don’t know what happened in this man’s life that brought him to this point, but he was ready for harvest. There may have been a lot of seed planters before now—maybe friends, family, or total strangers that had the faithfulness and obedience to tell him what he needed to hear. The Bible tells us that some plant, some harvest, some water, and Philip was ready to be whatever tool God needed, whenever God wanted to use him. The fact of the matter is planting and harvesting can sometimes get **dirty**. That is what deters a lot of people from going. But our friend Phil was ready and willing to do what it takes. He understood its importance. Do we? Personally, I need to see souls saved. I don’t have to personally win them, but I want to. The greatest emotional moment for me in church is during baptisms. Why is that? Because, I know someone just made a commitment about their future about eternity. I know heaven rejoices and so we ought to rejoice.] **29 Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go near and overtake this chariot.”**

**30 So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, “Do you understand what you are reading?”**

**31 And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him.** [This is not one of the dirty times I mentioned earlier. Phil had a wide open door here. There will always be some open and some closed doors. We do not know which ones those will be, so it becomes part of the faithful’s job to try each and every door. Tell **everyone**! I am sure that Phil’s successful ministry in Samaria had many literal and figurative doors that were shut in his face. Earlier passages in this chapter even show us one such occurrence of strong opposition. However, here the door is open for Phil and he walks right in—no dragging of feet, no making sure this is the will of God, just obedience. When our hearts are in the right place and we are walking close with God, we can expect God to open doors. We ought to **expect** open doors. Sometimes being obedient and serving God is just that easy!] **32 The place in the Scripture which he read was this:**

*"He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;  
And as a lamb before its shearer is silent,  
So He opened not His mouth.*

**33** *In His humiliation His justice was taken away,  
And who will declare His generation?  
For His life is taken from the earth."*

**34** So the eunuch answered Philip and said, "I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?" **35** Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. [Wow! Was that a softball thrown to Philip or what? Most believers, even new believers, could probably read this passage and say, "Well, of course, this is about Jesus." It is like finding someone leaning over the edge of a swimming pool on a 90 degree day, sweating, saying, "I am so hot. What should I do?" It would not take much to give them a push and say, "Enjoy!" God had led this Ethiopian to the point of yearning, seeking, spending much money (his trip and personal scroll of Isaiah would have cost plenty) to find the truth. He was seeking the Messiah and had his, "Bible," open to a prophecy about Jesus and here comes Phil. Was this an accident or divine providence? God is looking for faithful servants to be ready and willing to say, "It is **Jesus!**"]

Our problem is we all have to get past our fears and lean on faith in what God has done and what He is doing right now. If you don't have the answer, **so what?** As a fairly new believer and someone excited about who God is and what He is doing, I had a friend who was so interested about my excitement and would ask me lots of questions. I didn't have a clue about the answers, so my normal answer was, "I will find out." I didn't have a clue how to look it up for myself. I eventually said why don't you come and ask my pastor. Guess what? She got saved! I didn't do anything really, but who cares? Someone else was given a new home crafted by the Great Architect!

I have found God always uses you exactly where you **are**. If you are a newborn Christian, He can use you without a four-year degree in soul-winning. He will probably use your excitement and testimony of what He has already done in your life. You can share what has happened to you and how God has impacted your life. If you are sharing what God has done in your life, how effective of an argument will it be for someone else to respond, "No, He has not!" When I started really taking an interest in reaching people, I was so nervous that I couldn't remember any scriptures. What I did was decide to only remember **Romans 3** (I initially kept forgetting the verse). I would read **Romans 3:10, 23: As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one. . . . For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.** Beside these verses I would write the next verse to turn to and so on. I would just turn to and read the verse I wrote, all of which was in the book of **Romans** (this sequence of verses are called the Romans Road, but I did not even know that at the time). To my surprise, I found people who knew less about God and the Bible than I did. God provided opportunities (when I was willing to be used) for me to share where people were genuinely interested. In addition, as I stay obedient and faithful, He continues to give me opportunities to share.

Years later, after much study and an earned degree in Bible, I still could make no headway with my grandfather who was instrumental in raising me and whom I love and respected greatly. Then, he went



to the hospital with the fear of possible tuberculosis. After years of testimonies, prayers, tracts, prayers, strong urging, and prayers, I found myself standing in the hospital at his bedside, pleading with God to give me an opening, an opportunity. None came. When it was time for me to go and no apparent open door was available, I swallowed my pride and asked, "Has this made you think about what would happen if you die?" He replied, "Quite a bit." I realized I had been waiting for God to move and He had been waiting for me to do the same. I had no Bible, but having many verses memorized at this time in my life, I took this opportunity to share some as he enthusiastically listened. My thought was this was going to continue to be difficult. I told him that we are all sinners and to my surprise he said, "I have always known that." After I picked my jaw up off of the floor, I said that the Bible says there is a penalty for sin, but because God loves us so much He sent His son to die (to pay that penalty) for you and me. Again he responded with, "I have always believed that." The thought crossed my mind that he was just pacifying me and agreeing—merely going through the motions. Then, I quoted him **Romans 10:9, 13** (look it up) and asked, "Have you ever asked God to forgive you? Have you acknowledged your faith in His work? Have you ever asked Him to be a part of your life?" He responded, "I never knew I had to." All of these years he was so close on the precipice of decision, but it wasn't God's time. I said, "Would you like to pray and ask Him right now?" He said, "Yes. Very much so!" At the age of 84, my grandfather accepted Christ as his Savior. Praise His holy name!

**36 Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?"**

**37 Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may."**

**And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."**

**38 So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.** [When someone accepts Christ, they are forever **changed** (**2 Corinthians 5:17b: Old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new**). Most often there is a perceivable difference, an action or reaction that says, "Yes. They just accepted Christ." In the case of my grandfather, it turned out that he had cancer. He was released from the hospital a couple weeks later, but I didn't get to see him again. The cancer overcame him and God took him home two months after he made a profession. What I found out though, is that he had a "What hinders me from being baptized?" moment. He was a lifelong alcoholic with a habit of about five to six beers a day, couple glasses of wine with dinner, and usually some before and after dinner drinks. I only once saw him drunk, but drinking was a part of his life. That is what he and his friends did. What I didn't know until later is that after being released from the hospital, he came home and got rid of every bit of his large supply of liquor. He didn't have to. The doctor never said anything. He just told his family and friends, "It doesn't taste right." That was his perceivable change moment, which God may very well have meant just for me. When people are saved, you should see a difference because God makes a difference!]

**39 Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. 40 But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.** [What just happened? It is almost like the event with the eunuch never happened. Did anyone see it? Did the eunuch make an impact back in Ethiopia?

Did his lifestyle change? We do not know any of this. But we know Philip went back to his job of preaching in the cities, and most likely the eunuch went back to his job for the queen. Beyond the joy and changes we probably will not see this side of heaven, many of us who obediently tell others, will not have it alter our lives much. Our friend Phil never got a calling to go to Ethiopia. He went right back where he left off, doing exactly what God called him to do. Reading these verses and preparing this lesson brought back memories to me of those I have either witnessed to or actually led to the Lord. However, I have no clue what has happened to them or where they are now.]

The act of telling people about Jesus may not have a major impact on the direction of your life, but I firmly believe that the act of not telling someone—the lack of faith to do so—as an act of disobedience in obeying the Great Commission, can drastically alter your life.

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. God uses you **where** you are
2. God uses the **knowledge** you have
3. God is looking for obedience and faithfulness

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Are you walking with God? Get closer. Get in His Word. Remember, He is looking for obedience and faith.
2. Do you have a heart for souls? If not, pray for one! Find the heart of God. Develop the heart of God. He loves people!
3. Are you active in telling others? If not, get active! Remember, you don't have to have all the answers. God only requires **one step** at a time.



# The Church is Born: Good News for All

---

## Review

Beginning with Abraham in the Old Testament, the construct is that God is with a particular people and in a particular place. The construct is not that God is with all peoples at all time. The temple was built to house the glory and the presence of God. Occasionally, missionaries would be sent out (they were called prophets) to other nations (Jonah preaching to the Ninevites is an example of this). However, the normal construct was God is here and if you want to experience Him, you have to come here too.

When Jesus came, the concept of God with us was consistent with the Old Testament concept. However, when Jesus died, was buried, and rose again, He left us with the Holy Spirit and this was different—this was not present in the Old Testament. God being stationary was present in the Old Testament. God being in us consistently for the remainder of our lives is a new thing this is good news because we have the power and presence of God with us wherever we go.

## Preview: “Us” Redefined

The book of Acts is the transition period from the stationary construct of God to the mobile construct of God. [Acts 10-11](#) illustrates this shift.

We see the apostles begin to understand that things are now different and it takes them a while to get it. Remember that we are still very early on in the history of the church. Simon Peter (the big-name apostle in today’s story) is just now coming to grips with the idea that the gospel is for everyone.

Now, to Simon Peter’s credit, once he gets it he got that everything changes. Everyone is now a possible convert. Jesus came for everyone. We will continue to see this in the writings of the apostles and the authors of the New Testament.

God loves everyone and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit shows this new framework that God is now working in: the gospel is for everyone.

The result of this meeting between Peter and Cornelius was to clarify a fundamental truth about God’s Good News: salvation through Jesus Christ is for everyone, not just a select group of insiders. The Kingdom of Heaven is open to all who believe in Jesus Christ ([Acts 10:43](#)).

Key thought: The church welcomes **all** who believe

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Acts 10:1-11:18 (Author = Luke)



### Acts 10

#### Cornelius Sends a Delegation

**1** There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, **2** a devout *man* and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always. **3** About the ninth hour of the day [3:00 pm of day one] he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, “Cornelius!”

**4** And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, “What is it, lord?” [notice the lower-case, ‘l,’ indicating that this is someone Cornelius is subject to, but this is not God]

So he said to him, “Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God. **5** Now send men to Joppa [30+ miles south], and send for Simon whose surname is Peter. **6** He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do.” **7** And when

the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who waited on him continually. **8** So when he had explained all *these* things to them, he sent them to Joppa. [Cornelius was **obedient**]

#### Peter’s Vision

**9** The next day [day two], as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour [noon]. **10** Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance **11** and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. **12** In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. **13** And a voice came to him, “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.”

**14** But Peter said, “Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean.” [Peter was an obedient Jew who held to the **dietary** constraints of the Old Testament, but when Jesus came, His sacrifice overcame the bonds of the Law and set the Jews free from it. It is generally a bad idea to start a sentence with, “No, Lord.”]

**15** And a voice *spoke* to him again the second time, “What God has cleansed you must not call common.” **16** This was done three times [which almost implies that Peter said no a second time]. And the object was taken up into heaven again.

### Summoned to Caesarea

**17** Now while Peter wondered within himself what this vision which he had seen meant [How hard would this be to understand? Peter, you can eat anything now.], behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon’s house, and stood before the gate [still day two]. **18** And they called and asked whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there.

**19** While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Behold, three men are seeking you. **20** Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them.”

**21** Then Peter went down to the men who had been sent to him from Cornelius, and said, “Yes, I am he whom you seek. For what reason have you come?”

**22** And they said, “Cornelius *the* centurion, a just man, one who fears God and has a good reputation among all the nation of the Jews, was divinely instructed by a holy angel to summon you to his house, and to hear words from you.” **23** Then he invited them in and lodged *them*.

On the next day [day three] Peter went away with them, and some brethren from Joppa accompanied him. [Do not miss this: I love how the New Testament saints just trusted each other and were constantly traveling around with each other—they almost never did anything **alone**]

### Peter Meets Cornelius

**24** And the following day [day four] they entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his relatives and close friends [again, notice the gatherings]. **25** As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped *him*. **26** But Peter lifted him up, saying, “Stand up; I myself am also a man [i.e., do not worship me because I am like you].” **27** And as he talked with him, he went in and found many who had come together. **28** Then he said to them, “You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean [phase one: Peter sees **value** in those that are not like him]. **29** Therefore I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. I ask, then, for what reason have you sent for me?”

**30** So Cornelius said, “Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, **31** and said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your alms are remembered in the sight of God. **32** Send therefore to Joppa and call Simon here, whose surname is Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea. When he comes, he will speak to you.’ [This is an almost word-for-word retelling of [Acts 10:4-6](#)] **33** So I sent to you immediately, and you have done well to come. Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God.” [What a beautiful **attitude** to bring with you to hear from God—“we are all present . . . to hear all the things”]

### Preaching to Cornelius' Household

**34** Then Peter opened *his* mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality [there are serious ramifications from this statement: phase two: all men are created **equal**, all men are **loved** by God, and the gospel is for everyone]. **35** But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. **36** The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all— **37** that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: **38** how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. **39** And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree. **40** Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, **41** not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, *even* to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. **42** And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God *to be* Judge of the living and the dead. **43** To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins."

### The Holy Spirit Falls on the Gentiles

**44** While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. **45** And those of the circumcision [**Jews**] who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. **46** For they heard them speak with tongues [languages] and magnify God.

Then Peter answered, **47** "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we *have*?" **48** And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.

## Acts 11

### Peter Defends God's Grace

**1** Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. **2** And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision [**Jews**] contended with him, **3** saying, "You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!" [i.e., you broke the teachings of the modern-day religious leaders—remember that **Jesus** was accused of the same]

**4** But Peter explained *it* to them in order from the beginning, saying: **5** "I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, an object descending like a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came to me. **6** When I observed it intently and considered, I saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. **7** And I heard a voice saying to me, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.' **8** But I said, 'Not so, Lord! For nothing common or unclean has at any time entered my mouth.' **9** But the voice answered me again from heaven, 'What God has cleansed you must not call common.' **10** Now this was done three times, and all were drawn up again into heaven. **11** At that very moment, three men stood before the house where I was, having been sent to me from Caesarea. **12** Then the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing. Moreover these six

brethren accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. **13** And he told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said to him, 'Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon whose surname is Peter, **14** who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.' **15** And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. **16** Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, 'John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit [Peter is beginning to connect the teachings of his Rabbi with the work of the Holy Spirit].' **17** If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?"

**18** When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, "Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life." [YES! YES! YES! We get life, too! Don't you see? This changes everything! Phase three: the apostles got it here—now they understood why Jesus ate with sinners and hung out with outcasts—because Jesus came for them too. Jesus came for us!]

Since the gospel is for everyone, our challenge is to be as **inclusive** as we can

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. One man's obedience helped to change church history
2. Some passages do not make sense in isolation and require some '**soak**/meditation' time
3. There were theological deficiencies in the disciples early on—this series looks at the birth of the church and **Acts** records all of the first steps, dirty diapers, spilled milk, and first words
4. The gospel is for **EVERYONE**

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Be obedient to the Word of God in your life
2. Meditate on the more difficult passages and give the Holy Spirit time to **work** and illuminate
3. Be open to have your theology **tweaked** by the Word of God
4. See everyone as savable and **share** with everyone because the gospel is for everyone

# The Essential 100

---

## A Bible overview plan for 2011-2012

The Essential 100 (E100) is a systematic approach that guides readers through the big picture of the Bible. It is a carefully selected list of short Bible passages—50 from the Old Testament and 50 from the New Testament. Each testament is broken up into ten, five-week series. We will move from Old to New Testaments every five weeks. My goal is to teach three of the five lessons in every series.

The E100 in Sunday school: We will REAP (read, explain, apply, and personalize) one passage each week and finish a series every five weeks. Each lesson will include a key verse for memorization. At the end of two years, we will have covered the essential 100 passages in the Bible.

Additional information: To learn more about The E100 program and to obtain additional resources, visit [e100challenge.com](http://e100challenge.com). Our Sunday school website is [stuartheights.org/sundayschool](http://stuartheights.org/sundayschool).

## The Schedule: The Travels of the Apostle Paul

This is our sixth five-week series in the New Testament. So far, we have looked at The Early Years of Jesus, The Teachings of Jesus, the Miracles of Jesus, The Final Days of Jesus, and The Church is Born.

Date	Lesson	Key Verse(s)	Passage	Speaker
February 5	The Road to Damascus	Acts 9:3-5	Acts 9:1-31	Jim Fleming
February 12	The First Missionary Journey	Acts 14:21-22	Acts 13-14	Terry Bolden
February 19	The Council at Jerusalem	Acts 15:5-6	Acts 15	Jim Fleming
February 26	More Missionary Journeys	Acts 16:9-10	Acts 16-20	Jim Fleming
March 4	The Trip to Rome	Acts 28:15-16	Acts 25-28	Terry Bolden

## The Travels of the Apostle Paul: The Road to Damascus

---

### Review: "Us" Redefined

Beginning with Abraham in the Old Testament, the construct is that God is with a particular people and in a particular place. The construct is not that God is with all peoples at all time. The temple was built to house the glory and the presence of God. Occasionally, missionaries would be sent out (they were called prophets) to other nations (Jonah preaching to the Ninevites is an example of this). However, the normal construct was God is here and if you want to experience Him, you have to come here too.

When Jesus died, was buried, and rose again, He left us with the Holy Spirit. This is a shift from the construct that God is in one place to the construct that God is in us going to many places.

In our last five-week New Testament series, we saw the apostles truly understand the gospel of Jesus Christ is for **everyone**. In this five-week series, we see the implications of that fact. Everyone is now a possible convert. Jesus came for everyone. The apostles had to broaden the mission **field**—and they did.

### Preview: Get in the game!

Simultaneously, God was growing Saul to come alongside the apostles at the perfect time to fulfill this new mission field. We step into today's text, **Acts 9:1-31**, and see the following:

- Saul is converted on the Damascus Road (**Acts 9: 1-9**)
- Ananias loves Saul (**Acts 9:10-19**)
- Saul preaches (**Acts 9:20-22**)
- Saul runs (**Acts 9:23-25**)
- Barnabas introduces (**Acts 9:26-30**)
- The church grows (**Acts 9:31**)

Key thought: God needs you to put on His **jersey** and get in His **game** (no matter what position you play)

### Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Acts 9:1-31 (Author = Luke)

#### The Damascus Road: Saul Converted

**1 Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord** [because the gospel was blowing up all over the place and Saul's religious system was being challenged], **went to the high priest 2 and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus** [130 miles away from Jerusalem where Saul was], **so that if he found any who were of the Way** [Christians], **whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.** [Saul was a lawyer—a doctor of the Old Testament Law and it was his job to hunt down and bring to trial anyone who taught contrary to Old Testament Judaism. Saul did this very well. Saul traveled to find Christians and bring them to trial in Jerusalem. Saul was in the game—he was just playing for the **wrong** team.]

**3 As he [Saul] journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. 4 Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"** [David Guzik: The rabbis of Saul's day believed that God no longer spoke to man directly, as He did in the days of the prophets. However, they believed that one could hear the "echo" of God's voice, what they called "the daughter of the voice of God."]

**5 And he said, "Who are You, Lord?"** [A strange question since Saul answered it]

**Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting** [Jesus equates persecuting His followers with persecuting Him]. **It is hard for you to kick against the goads."** [David Guzik: A goad was a long, extremely sharp stick [usually iron] that was used to get an ox going the way you wanted him to when you were plowing. You would jab the hind legs of the ox with the goad until the ox cooperated.]

**6 So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?"** [A beautiful question that God must love to hear]



**Then the Lord said to him, “Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”** [This is a beautiful **non**-answer. If you study the New Testament, you will see Jesus rarely answering a question directly. He would often give a partial answer, ask a question Himself, or seemingly ignore the question.]

**7 And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one.** [a terrifying miracle] **8 Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus** [God used the men who traveled with Saul to get Saul exactly where God wanted Him to be]. **9 And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.** [I think Saul did a great deal of meditating those three days]

### Ananias Baptizes Saul

**10 Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, “Ananias.”**

**And he said, “Here I am, Lord.”**

**11 So the Lord said to him, “Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. 12 And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight.”** [God told Ananias to go to the most dangerous man in the world for Christians. In the movie, Armageddon, there is an exchange between Owen Wilson’s character and Billy Bob Thornton’s character where Billy Bob Thornton’s character describes their landing zone: **Oscar [played by Owen Wilson]: Ok, Mr. Truman, let's say that we actually do land on this. What's it gonna be like up there? Truman [played by Billy Bob Thornton]: 200 degrees in the sunlight, minus 200 in the shade, canyons of razor-sharp rock, unpredictable gravitational conditions, unexpected eruptions, things like that. Oscar: Okay, so the scariest environment imaginable. Thanks. That's all you gotta say, scariest environment imaginable.]**

**13 Then Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. 14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.”** [Ananias tries to walk God through the bad logic of this direction]

**15 But** [God is not having any of that] **the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. 16 For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.”** [The next few days will be a taste of things to come later]

**17 And Ananias went his way and entered the house** [Ananias got in the game]; **and laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul** [calling Saul a brother was true acceptance and love], **the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” 18 Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.** [Saul is in the game.]

**19 So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus.** [What was Ananias’ title? Ananias was just a **disciple** (because Jesus needs role players)]



### Saul Preaches Christ

**20 Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.** [Just days after his conversion, he is preaching for the ‘other side.’ When Saul got in the game, he got all the way in!]

**21 Then all who heard were amazed, and said, “Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?”**

**22 But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ.** [Who is Saul preaching to? Saul is preaching to the **Jews**. Most commentators think that there is a three-year gap between these two verses where Saul went to Arabia (see **Galatians 1:17-18**). **David Guzik: Luke skips the three years (perhaps) because he is writing a history of the church, not a history of Paul.**]

### Saul Escapes Death

**23 Now after many** [literally, ‘sufficient’] **days were past, the Jews plotted** [counseled together, deliberated] **to kill** [can mean anything from, ‘take him away,’ to, ‘kill’] **him** [**David Guzik: Saul now becomes the persecuted instead of the persecutor!**]. **24 But their plot became known to Saul. And they watched** [to stand beside and watch carefully—**Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures: watching . . . insidiously or on the sly**] **the gates day and night, to kill him.** **25 Then the disciples took him by night and let him down** [send/let down from a higher place to a lower place by slackening or loosening something (rope)] **through the wall in a large basket** [a reed basket or hamper].

The parallel passage for this text is **2 Corinthians 11:32-33: In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me; but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.** Houses were built on the outsides of the walls (or in the walls themselves if it was a casemate wall—parallel walls with a space between). Lowering Saul down was the work of copycats—it happened in **Joshua 2:15** (to the two spies that Joshua sent to Jericho) and in **1 Samuel 19:11-12** (to David who was spared by his wife Michal).

Sneaking out the back door might not seem like the spiritual thing to do, but it’s exactly what Jesus told them to do in **Matthew 10:23: When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.**

Picture this scene: Saul get in a basket and is lowered down the outside of the walls. There would have been ropes tied to the basket. Somebody had to have a hold of that rope. Somebody had to have some control. This would have been a heart-pounding escape with a full garrison looking for them. Somebody had to love him enough to hold on to that rope. You know what was probably going through Saul’s mind: “Don’t let go of that rope. Hold on with everything you have. Hold on. Don’t let go of the rope.”

We do not know the names of these disciples that got in the game to hold the rope, but they played their positions well. They chose to risk their lives. They had courage for the sake of the Gospel. They were physically strong. They cooperated with each other. They got in the game and did what was **needed**.

At this point, Paul was not “Paul”—he was still Saul. He was well known, but his name was not yet synonymous with Christianity. Saul was still a small player in the church. The believers that held the rope did not know what God was going to do with the man in the basket. Maybe your position in the game right now is not to let go of the rope. Do not let go—you do not **know** who is in the basket. You might even be the only one holding the rope.

### Saul at Jerusalem

**26 And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple** [understandable]. **27 But Barnabas** [Saul was persecuted by the Jews and now by the church] **took him** [means to take physically, the way Jesus grabbed Peter after walking (not so well) on the water in **Matthew 14**] **and brought him** [Saul] **to the apostles. And he** [Barnabas] **declared to them how he** [Saul] **had seen the Lord on the road, and that He** [Jesus] **had spoken to him** [Saul], **and how he** [Saul] **had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.** [Barnabas came, encouraged this new convert, and introduced Saul. Imagine where Paul would have been without Barnabas’ encouragement. Barnabas was a **mediator** between Saul and the disciples. Jesus was a mediator between God and us. Barnabas was imitating his Savior. **Who am I looking to develop?**] **28 So he** [Saul] **was with them at Jerusalem, coming in and going out. 29 And he** [Saul] **spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the Hellenists** [these are Jews born in a foreign land that speak Greek—we are close to seeing Saul evangelize Gentiles], **but they** [the Jews] **attempted to kill him** [Saul]. **30 When the brethren found out, they brought him** [Saul] **down to Caesarea and sent him** [Saul] **out to Tarsus.** [David Guzik: For his own protection, the Christians in Jerusalem sent him out to Tarsus. Twelve years will pass in the life of Saul before he again enters into prominent ministry, being sent out as a missionary from the church at Antioch.]

### The Church Prospers

**31 Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied** [not added, not increased, multiplied—multiplication is code for exponential growth].

Challenge: Get in the game and do your part—God will do His part

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. God has a **spot** for you on His team
2. Those that are in the game need encouragement
3. God will do what only **God** can do

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Get in the game
2. Encourage those who are in the game
3. Give God the **glory** when God does what only God can do

# The Travels of the Apostle Paul: The First Missionary Journey

---

## Preview: Why Paul?

What made Paul so special? Why was he so successful? Was it his great education, his zeal, his faith, or his experience? Maybe. It probably had more to do with his attitude. Notice today how many times God and the Holy Spirit directly do things or fill people through this passage. Paul lifted God above himself. From the moment he was saved, his heart responded, “Lord, what would you have me to do?”

Key thought: Paul and Barnabas show us how to be effective **witnesses** and faithful servants

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Acts 13-14 (Author = Luke)

### Acts 13

**1 Now in the church that was at Antioch** [There is a clear shift from focusing on the church in Jerusalem and the “Jewish” apostles to the churches outside of Jerusalem (especially Antioch) and their corresponding servants. The focus of the Lord’s church will not be on prophets, kings, and various leaders. We are now all in-dwelted with the Holy Spirit and God has and continues to use, “the faithful.”] **there were certain prophets and teachers** [Antioch has a who’s who of great teachers. When starting a thriving and growing program anywhere, God will usually start with proper teaching and training from His Word. These were men who clearly knew and understood the Word of God and were teaching and discipling others, in order to prepare them for what He was about to do. This may very well have been the First Stuart Heights Baptist Church. God has indeed blessed us with many good men and women who have been teaching sound doctrine throughout this growing process that we have observed. Could the Lord be preparing us for something even greater?]: **Barnabas** [middle eastern thought and writings always starts with the most important or prominent of people when listing those involved], **Simeon who was called Niger** [perhaps the man that carried Christ’s cross], **Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with** [raised with] **Herod the tetrarch** [the Herod that had John the Baptist killed and the Herod that was at Jesus’ trial], **and Saul** [almost an afterthought: “Oh yeah, there is also this guy named Saul.”]. **2 As they ministered to the Lord and fasted** [They did not stop to focus on asking God, “What now?” They continued their service to the Lord. Using Jim’s often-used analogy: “They were not letting go of the rope.”], **the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate** [To set aside for a **purpose**; **David Guzik: You can’t really say “yes” to God’s call on your life until you can say “no” to things that will keep you from that call**] **to Me Barnabas and Saul** [Why? Why not Simeon or Lucius? Why Saul?] **for the work to which I have called them.”** [It is God’s calling, not our personal preference. Saul was not the most prominent. He apparently was not the best teacher. Had the decision been up to the church in Antioch, Saul may not have been chosen. However, these men and women of faith trusted God and moved forward with His plan.] **3 Then, having fasted** [Fasting is often needed to focus on God and His will. There was a burden for something (perhaps reaching the lost?) this church had and God called on those who had the burden to do the work.] **and prayed** [important to be “in tune” and on the same page as God], **and laid hands on them** [There was no need of power—they already had the Holy Spirit. This is symbolic and greatly beneficial to the recipient. This tells the chosen that, “We are behind you. We have your back. We will continue to pray for you. We won’t let go of the rope.” As a recipient of this praying and laying

on of hands for a God-given task, I can personally tell you it is both greatly encouraging, personally inspiring, and helps keep the thought of your responsibility on your mind throughout your calling. During hard times and struggles, God will bring this event back to mind to say, “There are still people back home holding onto the rope.”], **they sent them away** [And they were gone for a year].

A common theme: the Word is preached, God/Holy Spirit moves, and **opposition** arises

### Preaching in Cyprus

**4 So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus** [Barnabas’ home]. **5 And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews** [Though called to the Gentiles, Saul/Paul never lost his heart for his own people. He always practiced **Romans 1:16c**: “to the Jew first.”]. **They also had John as their assistant** [The scripture does not always tell us who else was traveling with them, but we frequently get glimpses of others involved in ministering with them and to them. John is probably mentioned here that we may track a life much like our own with ups and downs. The word ‘assistant’ is often translated ‘teacher’ or ‘one who disciples.’ One of John Mark’s jobs may have been to instruct new converts.].

**6 Now when they had gone through the island to Paphos** [they preached through the entire island, from east to west], **they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar-Jesus, 7 who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man called for Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God** [Their message had spread even to the upper governmental levels. It accomplished what God had intended (**Isaiah 55:11**).]. **8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith** [The message and work of God will not go **unopposed**. **Spurgeon: Wherever there is likely to be great success, the open door and the opposing adversaries will both be found. If there are no adversaries, you may fear that there will be no success.**]. **9 Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him 10 and said, “O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? 11 And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time.”**

**And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand. 12 Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord** [He believed because of the Word of God. The “miracle” was confirmation of what the proconsul already heard from Paul].

### At Antioch in Pisidia

**13 Now when Paul and his party** [clear transition of leadership from Barnabas] **set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia** [this was swampy, harsh terrain that was mosquito-infested and robbers frequented the roads]; **and John, departing from them** [John Mark quit. We do not know why, but God was not through with him. **2 Timothy 4:11** shows his strong come back, reconciliation, usefulness. The fact that he penned the book of **Mark** is good evidence.], **returned to Jerusalem. 14 But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue** [location of not only Jews, but converts seeking Jehovah] **on the Sabbath day and sat down. 15 And**

after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, “Men *and* brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.” [This was a common practice to open the “pulpit” to men of teaching]

**16 Then Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said** [Paul starts with common ground; the history of Israel. He uses their history and prophecies (all from God’s Word) to bring them to the gospel. This is a beautiful dissertation dealing with common Jewish doubts and appeals to those converts who were seeking after more than what religion could offer.], **“Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen: 17 The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He brought them out of it. 18 Now for a time of about forty years He put up with their ways in the wilderness. 19 And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land to them by allotment.**

**20 “After that He gave *them* judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. 21 And afterward they asked for a king; so God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. 22 And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, ‘I have found David the *son* of Jesse, a man after My *own* heart, who will do all My will.’ 23 From this man’s seed, according to *the* promise, God raised up for Israel a Savior—Jesus— 24 after John had first preached, before His coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. 25 And as John was finishing his course, he said, ‘Who do you think I am? I am not *He*. But behold, there comes One after me, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to loose.’**

**26 “Men *and* brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to you the word of this salvation has been sent. 27 For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled *them* in condemning *Him*. 28 And though they found no cause for death *in Him*, they asked Pilate that He should be put to death. 29 Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took *Him* down from the tree and laid *Him* in a tomb. 30 But God raised Him from the dead. 31 He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people. 32 And we declare to you glad tidings—that promise which was made to the fathers. 33 God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm:**

‘You are My Son,  
Today I have begotten You.’

**34 And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus:**

‘I will give you the sure mercies of David.’

**35 Therefore He also says in another Psalm:**

‘You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.’

**36** “For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; **37** but He whom God raised up saw no corruption. **38** Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; **39** and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. **40** Beware therefore, lest what has been spoken in the prophets come upon you:

**41** ‘Behold, you despisers,  
Marvel and perish!  
For I work a work in your days,  
A work which you will by no means believe,  
Though one were to declare it to you.’”

### Blessing and Conflict at Antioch

**42** So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles [proselytes] begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. **43** Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God [people got **saved**].

**44** On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. **45** But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul. **46** Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, “It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles [Paul never lost his heart to reach his own people (**Romans 10:1**)]. **47** For so the Lord has commanded us:

‘I have set you as a light to the Gentiles,  
That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.’”

**48** Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord [this was an appropriate response by new believers and should be an appropriate response by all believers]. **And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.**

**49** And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region [When God’s Word and attributes are being shared and displayed, word spreads (i.e., Stuart Heights). We should share the good news, but we should also be testifying to others about what great things God is doing at our church.]. **50** But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled [physically escorted them out of the region] them from their region. **51** But they shook off the dust from their feet against them [Do not let **opposition** deter or stop you. Sure, it can hurt. It can be discouraging, but if you are doing the will and calling of God, you must realize it will not go unhindered. Do not quit. Shake off the opposition (dust that was stirred) and move on (see also **Luke 9:5, 10:11**). Quit carrying your dust.], **and came to Iconium. 52** And the disciples were filled with joy [not from reaching a new city, but suffering for Jesus (**James 1:2**)] **and with the Holy Spirit.**

## Acts 14

### At Iconium

**1** Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke [spoke the Word] **that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed** [the Holy Spirit moved]. **2** But the unbelieving Jews stirred up [opposition arises] **the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren.** **3** Therefore [Was this because of the new converts or because of the opposition? Yes] **they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands** [Do not forget it is always the Lord who really does the work and thus should get all the credit].

**4** But the multitude of the city was divided: part sided with the Jews, and part with the apostles. **5** And when a violent attempt was made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to abuse and stone them, **6** they became aware of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding region. **7** And they were preaching the gospel there.

### Idolatry at Lystra

**8** And in Lystra [a Greek city with no Jews] **a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple from his mother's womb, who had never walked.** **9** This man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, **10** said with a loud voice, "Stand up straight on your feet!" And he leaped and walked. **11** Now when the people saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying in the Lycaonian *language*, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!" **12** And Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. **13** Then the priest of Zeus, whose temple was in front of their city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, intending to sacrifice with the multitudes [the enemy has many ways to attack and stop or dilute the message].

**14** But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude, crying out **15** and saying, "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them, **16** who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. **17** Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." **18** And with these sayings they could scarcely restrain the multitudes from sacrificing to them.

### Stoning, Escape to Derbe

**19** Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul *and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead* [Was he dead or not? We do not know. **Galatians 6:17b**: **I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.** This stoning definitely would have left marks! This would have strongly reminded Paul of the stoning of Stephen.]. **20** However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city [What kind of impact would this have made? No one bothered him in this city again. In fact, there may have been someone here who



was greatly inspired by this event. Timothy was raised in Lystra.]. **And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.**

### Strengthening the Converts

**21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch** [What? Why did they return to the area of great opposition? Why did they return to the places that wanted to kill them? Curiously enough, there was no opposition documented on the return trip.], **22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”** [Is there any persecution/tribulation from your ministry (**2 Timothy 3:12**)? If we are going to live a God-led kind of life, there will be persecution.] **23 So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. 24 And after they had passed through Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. 25 Now when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. 26 From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed.**

**27 Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done** [God is the hero] **with them, and that He had opened** [God is the hero] **the door of faith to the Gentiles** [They not only were faithful in telling others about the good news, but they took the necessary time to disciple, encourage, and build up the church]. **28 So they stayed there a long time with the disciples.**

Challenge: The purpose of evangelism is to build Christ’s church, not your **reputation**. Paul never lost this focus. At the end of his life, sitting in prison, his thoughts were not of regret. His desire for God remained the same. **Philippians 3:10: That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.** My hope and prayer for SHBC is that we are growing because God alone is being glorified. My hope and prayer is that God is preparing and raising up Pauls through our congregation that will learn to fully deny self and lift up God to the multitudes who He died for, but don’t know Him. My hope and prayer is to be a Paul. How about you?

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. God is still looking for **witnesses**
2. God is still looking for those who will lift Him above themselves
3. God is still looking for obedience, without excuse or regret

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Be a **witness**!
2. Sincerely ask, “God, what would you have me to do?”
3. Be a Paul. No excuses, no complaints, and no matter the sacrifice or cost.



## Maps

Source: [Quaerentia: Mark Meynell with All Souls Church in London, England](#)

### Paul's First Missionary Journey



# The Travels of the Apostle Paul: The Council at Jerusalem

---

## Preview: Two Examples of Disagreements

In this passage, we see how the early church (~50 AD) handled a divisive issue. When the disagreement became public (**Acts 15:2**), the opponents did not gossip or fight. Instead, they came together (**Acts 15:2-4**), listened to all sides (**Acts 15:5-12**), remained sensitive to the work of the Holy Spirit (**Acts 15:8**), and accepted the decision of the leaders (**Acts 15:19**). Sadly, after avoiding a split in the church, Paul and Barnabas could not agree on a personnel issue so they parted company (**Acts 15:37-39; 13:13**).

Key thought: Disagreements in the church need not always cause division

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Acts 15 (Author = Luke)

### Conflict over Circumcision

**1 And certain men came down from Judea and taught** [inchoative imperfect active: began to teach and kept it up] **the brethren, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.”** [Pop quiz: **Jesus + X = salvation?** X = **0**] **2 Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension** [standing insurrection] **and dispute** [mutual questioning, disputation, discussion] **with them** [read: a dialogue over a core theological doctrine], **they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question.**

**3 So, being sent on their way by the church, they** [Paul and Barnabas] **passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, describing the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy** [What am I causing?] **to all the brethren. 4 And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders** [the apostles were the **leaders** of the early church and the elders were those in authority underneath the apostles]; **and they reported all things that God had done with them. 5 But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed** [these were Christians] **rose up, saying, “It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses** [Jesus + X].”

### The Jerusalem Council

**6 Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter** [this would have been a who’s who of leaders: Paul, Barnabas, Peter, James, and John; **Robertson’s New Testament Word Pictures: So far as we know this is the only time that Paul and John met face to face**]. **7 And when there had been much dispute** [the same word used in **Acts 15:2**; mutual questioning, disputation, discussion; this was civil discourse for the sake of the gospel; **all** sides had their say], **Peter rose up and said to them** [Peter starts the official deliberations amongst the apostles and elders because a decision needs to be made]: **“Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago** [about ten years prior] **God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. 8 So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, 9 and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith** [**First**, a review of prior revelation is given (**What did God say?** Salvation is through faith)—Peter says that circumcision and Law-keeping have nothing to do with salvation]. **10 Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11 But we believe** [Theology

exists in the context of community. Corporate theology is as important as individual theology. What **we** believe is as important as what **I** believe. We are in this together.] **that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.**" [Not only is salvation for everyone, but salvation is the **same** for everyone. This is the last mention of Simon Peter in **Acts**.]

**12 Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul** [Barnabas probably took the lead in this explanation—remember that Barnabas had more contacts within the Jerusalem Christian community than Paul did] **declaring how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles** [**Second**, examples from experience are given (**What has happened?** God has worked miracles amongst the Gentiles)]. **13 And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, "Men and brethren, listen to me: 14 Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. 15 And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:**

**16 'After this I will return**

**And will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down;**

**I will rebuild its ruins,**

**And I will set it up;**

**17 So that the rest of mankind may seek the LORD,**

**Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name,**

**Says the LORD who does all these things.'** [**Third**, examples from Scripture are given (**What did God say long ago?** God said that the Gentiles would one day be able to seek Him)]

**18 "Known to God from eternity are all His works** [**People's New Testament: This calling of the Gentiles is a part of the Divine plan known to God from the beginning. Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures: This purpose of God . . . is an old one.**]. **19 Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, 20 but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality** [any inappropriate sex], **from things strangled, and from blood** [all things commonly associated with pagan worship at that time]. **21 For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath."** [**Fourth**, exhortation to godliness is given (**What direction is consistent with what God has said, what has happened, and what God said long ago?** Sanctified and righteous living are still needed)]

### **The Jerusalem Decree**

**22 Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas** [Paul is listed first again because Paul takes the leadership role out in the mission field], **namely, Judas who was also named Barsabas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren.**

**23 They wrote this letter by them:**

**The apostles, the elders, and the brethren,**

**To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia:**

### Greetings.

**24** Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled [troubled, agitated] you with words, unsettling [moving, unsettling, subverting; Barnes' Notes: to collect together the vessels used in a house—the household furniture—for the purpose of removing it] your souls, saying, “You must be circumcised and keep the law” [first, they stated their understanding of the facts]—to whom we gave no such commandment—[second, they clarified what they said] **25** it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, **26** men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ [third, they vouched for the old missionaries]. **27** We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who will also report the same things by word of mouth [fourth, they vouched for the new missionaries; Adam Clarke: Judas and Silas are sent to corroborate by their oral testimony what was contained in the letters sent from the council]. **28** For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: **29** that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well [fifth, they instructed them in a clear path of godliness].

### Farewell.

Whose advice did the church take? Peter, Barnabas, Paul, or James? **James** (which, turns out to be great evidence that Peter had no ecclesiastical authority over the early church as the Roman Catholic Church teaches—the fact that James spoke at all after Peter shows that Peter had no papal authority)

Adam Clarke: James determined *what* ought to be done; and the whole assembly resolved *how* that should be done

### Continuing Ministry in Syria

**30** So when they were sent off, they came to Antioch; and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the letter. **31** When they had read it, they rejoiced over its encouragement [Theological disagreements can end **well**. Adam Clarke: This was one of the first controversies in the Christian Church; but, though the difference of sentiment was considerable, it led to no breach of Christian charity nor fellowship among themselves. Barnes' Notes: [on the topic of this council] It came together, not to promote, but to silence disputation; not to persecute the people of God, but to promote their peace; not to be a scene of harsh and angry recrimination, but to be an example of all that was mild, and tender, and kind.]. **32** Now Judas and Silas, themselves being prophets also, exhorted [to encourage by bringing close] and strengthened the brethren with many words. **33** And after they had stayed *there* for a time, they were sent back with greetings from the brethren to the apostles.

**34** However, it seemed good to Silas to remain there. **35** Paul and Barnabas also remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

### Division over John Mark

**36 Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing** [road trip; **Wesley: This was all that St. Paul designed at first; but it was not all that God designed by his journey**].” **37 Now Barnabas was determined** [deliberated with himself, considered, **resolved**] **to take with them John called Mark** [John Mark was Barnabas’ cousin]. **38 But Paul insisted** [kept on thinking it fit, right, kept judging it worthy, kept on deeming it deserving] **that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work.** **39 Then the contention** [incitement, **irritation**] **became so sharp that they parted from one another.** [Geneva Study Bible: A lamentable example of discord between excellent men and very great friends, yet not because of profane matters or their own private affairs, neither yet because of doctrine. God uses the faults of his servants to the profit and building of the Church. It is important to note that the original text denotes no anger or ill will on either side of this argument. It appears as though they found a topic on which they could not agree to disagree. **Coffman: Strong men with minds strongly made up often find disagreement between them.**] **And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus** [John Mark’s home; **J. W. McGarvey: The separation of Barnabas and Paul is our separation from Barnabas. His name is not mentioned again by Luke.**]; **40 but Paul chose Silas and departed** [People’s New Testament: Neither would **yield**, so they determined to work separately. Barnabas, with Mark, went to visit the churches of Cyprus, while Paul chose Silas as his fellow laborer.], **being commended by the brethren to the grace of God** [Adam Clarke: There is no proof that the Church did not recommend Barnabas to the grace of God, as well as Paul; but, as St. Luke had for the present dropped the story of Barnabas, and was now going on with that of Paul and Silas.]. **41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.**

**Who was right, Paul or Barnabas?** Four schools of thought:

1. Paul was right (most use the argument that since Paul was an apostle, he was right—the problem with this argument is that Barnabas is also called an apostle; most also use the argument that Paul was commended by other believers—we have already addressed this)
2. Barnabas was right (most arguments in favor of Barnabas rely on the fact that love should win the day in disagreements between believers)
3. Neither Paul nor Barnabas was right (most arguments have at the root of their basis the concept taught in **1 Corinthians 11:14: Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor** [disgrace, shame] **to him?** Many different words are used by the various translations to describe the meaning of this word, but no translation uses the word, ‘sin.’ It is not a sin, it is a shame,—just like, it is a shame that it is too hot or too cold in this room sometimes; it was a shame that they could not get along, but it was not necessarily a sin)
4. Both Paul and Barnabas were right (most arguments for this opinion show that God worked through both of their ministries—but this is hardly a good argument because God is always working through and despite both our obedience and our disobedience—that is just what He does; the logical root behind this argument is that if it works out well, it must have been God’s plan—this logic can lead to serious theological error and I caution you in using it)



**Jamieson, Fausset, Brown:** How watchful does all this teach Christians, and especially Christian ministers and missionaries, to be against giving way to rash judgment and hot temper towards each other, especially where on both sides the glory of Christ is the ground of difference! How possible is it that in such cases both parties may, on the question at issue, be more or less in the right! How difficult is it even for the most faithful and devoted servants of Christ, differing as they do in their natural temperament even under the commanding influence of grace, to see even important questions precisely in the same light! And if, with every disposition to yield what is unimportant, they still feel it a duty each to stand to his own point, how careful should they be to do it lovingly, each pursuing his own course without disparagement of his Christian brother! And how affectingly does the Lord overrule such difference of judgment and such manifestations of human infirmity, by making them “turn out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel”; as in this case is eminently seen in the two missionary parties instead of one, not travelling over the same ground and carrying their dispute over all the regions of their former loving labors, but dividing the field between them!

**Matthew Henry:** Paul and Barnabas, who were not separated by the persecutions of the unbelieving Jews, nor the impositions of the believing Jews, were yet separated by an unhappy disagreement between themselves. O the mischief that even the poor and weak remainders of pride and passion, that are found even in good men, do in the world, do in the church!

**Wesley:** O how mighty is the grace of God! which in the midst of the world, in the midst of sin, among so many snares of Satan, and in spite of the incredible weakness and depravity of nature, yet overcomes all opposition, sanctifies, sustains, and preserves us to the end!

Jim’s opinion: A blending of arguments two and three—I think Barnabas was right about John Mark, but I am saddened that these two wise leaders could not find a way to get along without separation. It reminds me of many men and women that have come through Stuart Heights in my eleven years here who have left because of matters far more trifling than this.

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. Crystal clear **theology** assists in godly living
2. Jesus **is** salvation
3. Reconciliation is always God’s plan (but God will be the **hero** no matter what—He can even work through lack of reconciliation)

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Discuss theology with other believers
2. Never add anything to the **gospel**
3. Stand in the gap for those willing to serve

# The Travels of the Apostle Paul: More Missionary Journeys

---

## Preview: Keep Moving Forward

Wherever Paul went, he moved the gospel forward. He was relentless about it. He took others along with him, but he was always moving forward. It reminds me of the 2007 Disney movie, Meet the Robinsons. The movie is about a young inventor who travels through time to meet his mother and eventually meets his entire family. The movie ends with this quote from **Walt Disney: We keep moving forward, opening new doors, and doing new things, because we're curious and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths.**

Key thought: Keep moving the gospel **forward**

## Chapter summaries

**Acts 16:** Timothy joins Paul and Silas. Paul has a vision of Macedonia. Paul baptizes Lydia and picks up Dr. Luke. Paul and Silas are imprisoned, an earthquake occurs, the jailer is saved, and they are released.

**Acts 17:** They preach at Thessalonica. They are attacked at Jason's house. They taught the Bereans. Paul engages the philosophers at Athens and preaches at the Areopagus.

**Acts 18:** Paul goes to Corinth and lives with Aquila and Priscilla for 18 months. Paul returns to Antioch and finishes his vow. Aquila and Priscilla teach Apollos.

**Acts 19:** Paul stays at Ephesus for three months. Paul performs many miracles and a riot occurs.

**Acts 20:** Paul leaves Ephesus and travels to Troas. Paul preaches all night, Eutychus dies, and Paul raises Eutychus from the dead. Paul continues to Miletus. Paul calls for the Ephesian elders and blesses them.

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Acts 16-20 (Author = Luke)

↓↓

### Acts 16

#### Timothy Joins Paul and Silas

**1 Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father was Greek. 2 He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. 3 Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek. [Did we not just decide in last week's lesson that circumcision was not necessary for salvation? Is Paul going back on the church's decision? No, Paul was all things to **all** men to move the gospel forward (1 Corinthians 9:19-23).] 4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. 5 So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.**

↑↑

## The Macedonian Call

**6** Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. **7** After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them. **8** So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. **9** And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” **10** Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.

## Lydia Baptized at Philippi

**11** Therefore, sailing from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and the next *day* came to Neapolis, **12** and from there to Philippi, which is the foremost city of that part of Macedonia, a colony. And we were staying in that city for some days. **13** And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met *there* [normally, Paul went to the synagogue, but this town was so small that it did not have a synagogue]. **14** Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. **15** And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.” So she persuaded us.



## Paul and Silas Imprisoned

**16** Now it happened, as we went to prayer [Satan’s attacks come when we attack], that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met [used in a military sense for a hostile meeting] us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling [They were cultic pimps, prostituting her spirit for money as opposed to her body for money]. **17** This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, “These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.” [Imagine a prostitute on the side of the street with a T-shirt that says, “I love Jesus.” This was not the best witness for Jesus. Now, if she was talented, you would think that she would have told her masters, “You guys need to put something aside for a rainy day because using me for money is about to come to an end.”] **18** And this she did for many days.

But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And he [the spirit] came out that very hour. **19** But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged *them* into the marketplace to the authorities. [The marketplace was the place of assembly for public debating, for elections, for trials, for buying and selling and all kinds of business. Some people when they realize they can no longer get ahead just seek to get even.]



**20** And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, “These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city; **21** and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe.” [They meant to charge the apostles with introducing a new religion, which was against Roman law.]



However, there was no law against converting since Romans were free men.] **22 Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes** [Normally, prisoners were stripped naked, but the word for clothes refers only to the upper garment] **and commanded them to be beaten with rods** [The Greek word for rods is *fasces*. Fasces are a bundle of rods bound together with a hatchet at one end. The hatchet was used as a show of power and the cords would be unbound to beat a prisoner. The fasces are a symbol of power and can be seen on multiple things in the USA—the wall behind the speaker of the house, on Abraham Lincoln’s statue on the Lincoln Memorial, and on various coats of armor and symbols.]. **23 And when they had laid many stripes on them** [because of **Deuteronomy 25:3**, the Jews never gave more than thirty-nine stripes to any criminal but the Romans had no such law], **they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer** [most likely this was a retired Roman soldier—as many jailers at that time were] **to keep them securely. 24 Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison** [the Roman public prisons had an entrance area, then an outer prison and behind this the inner prison which was basically a dungeon] **and fastened their feet in the stocks** [a wooden instrument with five holes for the wrists, head and feet to be secured in a painful position].

### The Philippian Jailer Saved

**25 But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing** [Instead of cursing men, they praised God—remember **1 Thessalonians 5:18**. Rejoicing in persecution comes from God’s grace. We do not have it within us to do this on our own.] **hymns** [Passover hymns—**Psalms 113-118**. Here is a sample:

**Psalm 113:3: From the rising of the sun to its going down The LORD’s name is to be praised.**

**Psalm 114:7: Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord,**

**Psalm 115:2: Why should the Gentiles say, “So where is their God?”**

**Psalm 116:4: Then I called upon the name of the LORD: “O LORD, I implore You, deliver my soul!”**

**Psalm 116:16b: You have loosed my bonds.**

**Psalm 117:1a: Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles!**

**Psalm 118:5a: I called on the LORD in distress;**

**Psalm 118:6: The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?**

**Psalm 118:19a: Open to me the gates of righteousness]**

**to God , and the prisoners were listening** [the Greek word indicates that the prisoners enjoyed the songs they heard] **to them. 26 Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were loosed** [if the prison was excavated from rocks in the hillside, as was often the case, the earthquake would easily have slipped the bars of the doors loose and the chains would have fallen out of the walls]. **27 And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself.** [Every jailor was made responsible for

his prisoners, under the same penalty to which the prisoner himself was sentenced. In not escaping, Paul and Silas displayed love. The circumstances said escape, but love said stay. God's Gospel was more important than their freedom. This earthquake was not sent only for Paul and Silas, but it was also sent for the jailer and his family.] **28 But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here."** [Paul knew by divine revelation that everyone was still there because he and Silas were still in the inner prison. There comes a time when you and I have to speak up to stop people from their self-destructive ways.]

**29 Then he called for a light** [anyone that was more concerned about the jailer than escaping was someone that the jailer wanted to listen to], **ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. 30 And he brought them out and said, "Sirs** [This was a title of honor (also translated, 'Lord') used with respect by servants to their masters. How many times do you think this jailer has used this particular word toward his prisoners?], **what must I do to be saved?"** [This question is obviously not referring to his personal safety since none of the prisoners had escaped. This is a question about his soul (he was familiar with the reason they were in jail). The jailer wants the kind of life that Paul and Silas had. Our Christianity should make others want what we have with God.]

**31 So they said, "Believe on the Lord** [This is the same Greek word that the jailer used to address Paul and Silas in verse 30. By using the word that the jailer used, they were informing the jailer of the way of salvation and putting Paul, Silas and Jesus in the right order.] **Jesus Christ, and you will be saved** [Paul's answer is the essence of the gospel: believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved. This is salvation by grace alone, received by faith alone. This is a statement that any of us should be ready to give to any man at any time. Paul and Silas said just enough. This was not a time for a long sermon, but a get-to-the-substance statement. Some have worried that Paul's invitation to salvation here is too easy and does not include repentance. Paul never specifically called the keeper of the prison to repent because he was already repenting. We see the repentance of the jailer in that he fell down trembling.], **you and your household."** **32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes** [he is a changed man]. **And immediately he and all his family were baptized. 34 Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.** [Conversion changes a man. Cruelty gives way to kindness in the converted. If there is no change in a life, there has been no conversion. You cannot meet the Creator of the Universe and remain the same.]



### Paul Refuses to Depart Secretly

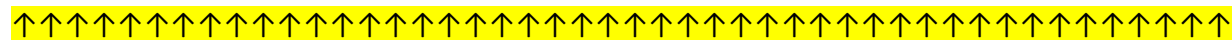
**35 And when it was day, the magistrates sent the officers** [a public official who held the fasces before a magistrate], **saying, "Let those men go."** [Earthquakes were perceived to be signs from the gods, so the magistrates might have felt that this was punishment from their own gods for their actions]

**36 So the keeper of the prison reported these words to Paul, saying, "The magistrates have sent to let you go. Now therefore depart, and go in peace."** [The jailer did not have the authority to let Paul and

Silas go even though he was now a Christian. The jailer still recognized the authority of the magistrates. One believer should not break the **law** for another.]

**37 But Paul said to them, “They have beaten us openly, uncondemned Romans** [To claim Roman citizenship was punishable by death and Paul and Silas could very well have had on their possession papers that indicated they were in fact Roman citizens. Paul and Silas could have at any time claimed Roman citizenship and gotten out of all of this. Our rights that our country gives us are not as important as our obedience God. God may ask us to lay down our **rights** for the good of another.], **and have thrown us into prison. And now do they put us out secretly? No indeed! Let them come themselves and get us out.”** [Literally, “Lead us out.” If the magistrates did this, it would be a public acknowledgment of their innocence and would go far in spreading the gospel. Paul was not going to stay in Philippi. Paul stood up to the injustice done to him lest it be done to other believers after he left.]

**38 And the officers told these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Romans** [To punish a Roman citizen inappropriately was an offence to all Romans and the punishment was death and the confiscation of property]. **39 Then they came and pleaded with them and brought them out** [literally, “led them out”—Paul and Silas got their public apology], **and asked them** [In the Greek, this is the imperfect active tense which means they kept on asking and asking and asking] **to depart from the city.** **40 So they went out of the prison and entered the house of Lydia** [Paul and Silas did not sue the justice system. Paul and Silas did not complain about it. Paul and Silas went back to work moving the gospel forward. When they had the freedom to preach the gospel, they preached the gospel. That is where many Christians make a mistake. They get bitter and angry and they end up using their civil rights to try to get even with people. Our rights should be used to **promote** the gospel, not to be satisfied with the **right** to promote the gospel. I know people who are outraged because they have been told they cannot pray in Jesus’ name in public when they do not even pray in Jesus’ name in private.]; **and when they had seen the brethren, they encouraged them and departed.** [Paul and Silas departed when it was God’s timing—when their work was complete. Lydia’s and the jailer’s families laid the foundation of the Philippian church. We have records of a representative of this church attending a church council over 600 years later.]



## Acts 17

## Preaching Christ at Thessalonica

**1** Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. **2** Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, **3** explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and *saying*, “This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ.” **4** And some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas.

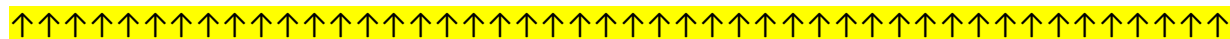
### Assault on Jason's House

**5 But the Jews who were not persuaded, becoming envious, took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob, set all the city in an uproar and attacked the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. 6 But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too. 7 Jason has harbored them, and these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king—Jesus." 8 And they troubled the crowd and the rulers of the city when they heard these things. 9 So when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.**



### Ministering at Berea

**10 Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea** [even though Paul and Silas left a ministry in Thessalonica, they did not leave *the* ministry]. **When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews** [Paul did not know how to **quit**—they had already been run out of multiple synagogues and they kept moving the gospel forward]. **11 These** [the Berean Jews] **were more fair-minded** [Some of your translations will have the word, 'noble' instead of fair-minded. This literally means nobler by birth; descended from ancestors that are more illustrious. **Barnes' Notes: It is always proof of a noble person to be willing to examine into the truth of any doctrine presented.**] **than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word** [The Bereans were teachable. They had enough humility to know they did not know it all. Teach the teachable and reach the reachable.] **with all readiness** [pay attention to the manner in which you pay **attention**, **and searched** [to sift up and down (as if panning for gold), to make careful and exact research as in legal processes] **the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so** [Every preacher should expect his doctrines to be examined in this way, and to be rejected if they are not in accordance with the word of God. If I teach something that is unbiblical and you believe it, we are both guilty. I have a responsibility to get it right and you have a responsibility to check it out.]. **12 Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men. 13 But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that the word of God was preached by Paul at Berea, they came there also and stirred up** [The word used here means to agitate, or excite, as the waves of the sea are agitated by the wind] **the crowds. 14 Then immediately the brethren sent Paul away, to go to the sea; but both Silas and Timothy remained there** [Everything Paul did would have been in vain had Silas and Timothy not stayed behind to help the new believers. Everyone needs **encouragement**. Everyone needs someone to come along side and help them out.]. **15 So those who conducted Paul brought him to Athens** [To make sure of his safe arrival. **Geneva Study Bible (1599): The sheep of Christ also watch their pastor's health and safety.** Part of our job as a congregation is to protect our pastors. Repeatedly we see in **Acts** that the preachers get in trouble and the men and women of God rally around them for protection. We must do the same. To forfeit this obligation is to hinder their ministry.]; **and receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him with all speed, they departed.**



## The Philosophers at Athens

**16** Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols. **17** Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the *Gentile* worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there. **18** Then certain **Epicurean** [philosophies: (1) everything happens by chance, (2) there is no life after death, and (3) eat, drink, and be merry] and **Stoic** [philosophies: (1) the gods do not care, (2) grin and bear it, and (3) do not trust anyone] philosophers encountered him. And some said, “What does this babblers want to say?”

Others said, “He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods,” because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.

**19** And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new doctrine is of which you speak? **20** For you are bringing some strange things to our ears. Therefore we want to know what these things mean.” **21** For all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing [sound familiar?].

## Addressing the Areopagus

**22** Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; **23** for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription:

TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.

Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: **24** “God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. **25** Nor is He worshiped with men’s hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. **26** And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, **27** so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; **28** for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring.’ **29** Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man’s devising. **30** Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, **31** because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

**32** And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, “We will hear you again on this *matter*.” **33** So Paul departed from among them. **34** However, some men joined him and believed, among them Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others with them.



## Acts 18

## Ministering at Corinth

**1 After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth** [Comparing where Paul had just been, Athens, with where he was now, Corinth, you could say that Corinth was the blue-collar town and Athens was the academic town. Corinth was a wicked city. The temple of Aphrodite had a thousand consecrated prostitutes and the very name to Corinthianize meant immorality. It was known to the ancients to be on the same level with Sodom. Estimates put its population somewhere between 100,000 and 1 million (it may have been the largest city in the world if you counted the tourists). A Greek proverb said, "See Corinth and **die**."]. **2 And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus** [Historians tell us that there was a man named Aquila born in Pontus that is noted for his Greek translation of the Old Testament. Many believe that this is the same Aquila.], **who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because [emperor] Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart [be expelled, deported] from Rome); and he came to them.** **3 So, because he was of the same trade [occupation], he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers.** **4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks.**

A Jewish guild always kept together in street or synagogue so this is how they probably met. Every Jewish boy in New Testament times was taught some kind of trade. A Jewish saying is that, “He that teaches not his son a trade, doth the same as if he taught him to be a thief.”

Their tents were made of rough goat's hair fabric that took great skill to cut and sew properly. Paul wove goats' hair into tents. Tarsus, Paul's hometown, was world renown for their black goats and long hair and their ability to use it in protective gear. Paul used tentmaker's language in [2 Timothy](#) when he wrote, **"rightly dividing the word of truth."** **Rightly dividing** refers to cutting out according to a pattern so that everything fits together properly so that it could be properly folded and used.



**5** When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews *that Jesus is the Christ*. **6** But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook *his* garments and said to them, “Your blood *be* upon your *own* heads; I *am* clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.” **7** And he departed from there and entered the house of a certain *man* named Justus, *one* who worshiped God, whose house was next door to the synagogue. **8** Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.

**9** Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, “Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; **10** for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city.” **11** And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. [There is no opportunity for hiding your true nature when you live with someone for 18 months—Aquila and Priscilla got to know the real Paul and Paul got to know the real Aquila and Priscilla.]

**12** When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him to the judgment seat, **13** saying, “This *fellow* persuades men to worship God contrary to the law.”

**14** And when Paul was about to open *his* mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, “If it were a matter of wrongdoing or wicked crimes, O Jews, there would be reason why I should bear with you. **15** But if it is a question of words and names and your own law, look *to it* yourselves; for I do not want to be a judge of such *matters*.” **16** And he drove them from the judgment seat. **17** Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat *him* before the judgment seat. But Gallio took no notice of these things.

### Paul Returns to Antioch

**18** So Paul still remained a good while. Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila *were* with him. He had *his* hair cut off at Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow. **19** And he came to Ephesus, and left them there; but he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. **20** When they asked *him* to stay a longer time with them, he did not consent, **21** but took leave of them, saying, “I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem; but I will return again to you, God willing.” And he sailed from Ephesus.

**22** And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up and greeted the church, he went down to Antioch. **23** After he had spent some time *there*, he departed and went over the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.



### Ministry of Apollos

**24** Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man *and* mighty in the Scriptures [Dr. Luke does not give platitudes lightly—and remember that the Holy Spirit is the author], came to Ephesus. **25** This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. **26** So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately [Aquila and Priscilla may not have been accomplished public speakers, but they were diligent students of the Word, and they loved to share it with others. Apollos had a keen mind and a quick understanding. He absorbed the truth they taught him and made it a part of his life and ministry. Moreover, because of this encounter with Aquila and Priscilla, he became an effective servant of God whom some of the Corinthians later placed on a level with Peter and Paul (**1 Corinthians. 1:12: Now I say this, that each of you says, “I am of Paul,” or “I am of Apollos,” or “I am of Cephas,” or “I am of Christ.”**). Paul not only moved the gospel forward, he taught **others** how to move the gospel forward as well.].



**27** And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; **28** for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.



## Acts 19

### Paul at Ephesus

**1** And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples **2** he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”

So they said to him, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.”

**3** And he said to them, “Into what then were you baptized?”

So they said, “Into John’s baptism.”

**4** Then Paul said, “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.”

**5** When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. **6** And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. **7** Now the men were about twelve in all.

**8** And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God. **9** But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. **10** And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

### Miracles Glorify Christ

**11** Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, **12** so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them. **13** Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, “We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches.” **14** Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so.

**15** And the evil spirit answered and said, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?”

**16** Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. **17** This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. **18** And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. **19** Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned *them* in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and *it* totaled fifty thousand *pieces* of silver. **20** So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.



## The Riot at Ephesus

**21** When these things were accomplished, Paul purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome." **22** So he sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, but he himself stayed in Asia for a time.

**23** And about that time there arose a great commotion about the Way. **24** For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no small profit to the craftsmen. **25** He called them together with the workers of similar occupation, and said: "Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade. **26** Moreover you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands. **27** So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worship."

**28** Now when they heard *this*, they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" **29** So the whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed into the theater with one accord, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's travel companions. **30** And when Paul wanted to go in to the people, the disciples would not allow him. **31** Then some of the officials of Asia, who were his friends, sent to him pleading that he would not venture into the theater. **32** Some therefore cried one thing and some another, for the assembly was confused, and most of them did not know why they had come together. **33** And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander motioned with his hand, and wanted to make his defense to the people. **34** But when they found out that he was a Jew, all with one voice cried out for about two hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

**35** And when the city clerk had quieted the crowd, he said: "Men of Ephesus, what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple guardian of the great goddess Diana, and of the *image* which fell down from Zeus? **36** Therefore, since these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly. **37** For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of your goddess. **38** Therefore, if Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a case against anyone, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another. **39** But if you have any other inquiry to make, it shall be determined in the lawful assembly. **40** For we are in danger of being called in question for today's uproar, there being no reason which we may give to account for this disorderly gathering." **41** And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.

## Acts 20

### Journeys in Greece

**1** After the uproar had ceased, Paul called the disciples to *himself*, embraced *them*, and departed to go to Macedonia. **2** Now when he had gone over that region and encouraged them with many words, he came to Greece **3** and stayed three months. And when the Jews plotted against him as he was

about to sail to Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia. **4 And Sopater of Berea accompanied him to Asia—also Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia. 5 These men, going ahead, waited for us at Troas. 6 But we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days joined them at Troas, where we stayed seven days.**



### Ministering at Troas

**7 Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight. 8 There were many lamps in the upper room [making it smoky, so a window would need to be opened] where they were gathered together. 9 And in a window sat a certain young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep [Eutychus was sitting on the windowsill. This is ‘sitting on the edge.’ I hope you are not sitting on the edge of our church. Come inside; get a good seat of service. Trees in the middle of a forest are rarely damaged in a storm—those that are on the edge fall.]. He was overcome by sleep; and as Paul continued speaking, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead [Now, most of us would have taken this as a ‘sign’ from God that we were supposed to go home at this point. Paul was preaching so hard that there was no one that noticed that Eutychus was sleeping in a way that was dangerous to him. If someone were sleeping in this class, would you not all know it? Would not someone lean over and wake that person up?]. 10 But Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing him said, “Do not trouble yourselves [literally, ‘stop making noise’—the eastern way to mourn a person is to wail], for his life is in him.” 11 Now when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till daybreak, he departed. 12 And they brought the young man in alive, and they were not a little comforted. [Get involved. Neat things happen when you move the gospel forward.]**



### From Troas to Miletus

**13 Then we went ahead to the ship and sailed to Assos, there intending to take Paul on board; for so he had given orders, intending himself to go on foot. 14 And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and came to Mitylene. 15 We sailed from there, and the next day came opposite Chios. The following day we arrived at Samos and stayed at Trogyllium. The next day we came to Miletus. 16 For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost.**



### The Ephesian Elders Exhorted

**17 From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. 18 And when they had come to him, he said to them: “You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, 19 serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials [What fun would a sporting event be with only one team? Opposition allows for enjoyment at success.] which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; 20 how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but**

proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, **21** testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. **22** And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there [You are not responsible for the consequences of obedience. You are responsible for obedience.], **23** **except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. 24** But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

**25** “And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. **26** Therefore I testify to you this day that I *am* innocent of the blood of all *men*. **27** For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. **28** Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers [literally, to look over—it is the job of our pastors to look over **into** our business], **to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.** **29** For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. **30** Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. **31** Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

**32** “So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. **33** I have coveted no one’s silver or gold or apparel. **34** Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. **35** I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

**36** And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. **37** Then they all wept freely, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, **38** sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship.

Paul was comfortable leaving them because he had fulfilled this particular mission—he had trained his replacements. **Have you trained your replacement?** You have finished your assignment when you have trained your replacement. Train your replacement to move the gospel forward.



## Apply (What is the point?)

1. Following Jesus is not **linear**
2. God will bring the right people at the right time
3. The gospel must always be moving forward

## Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Know that opposition does not equal being out of God's **will**
2. **Engage** with those that God brings into your life
3. Always be moving the gospel forward

# The Travels of the Apostle Paul: The Trip to Rome

---

## Preview: If Only . . . Not!

Have you ever wondered, “If only?” If only I had done things differently. If only I had obeyed God. If only I had witnessed when I should have. Most of us will struggle at some time with whether we took the right path or made the right decision. From what we can glean from scripture, Paul was not that kind of person. We can speculate from various stories in scripture that maybe a decision or direction was not the best for Paul, but he did not appear to have dwelt on that. Paul kept moving forward. If he saw an open door, he would step forward until God closed it. Paul had a calling from God that varies little from what He is calling each of us to do. What did God call Paul to do? If you answered, “Be a missionary to the Gentiles,” you would be only partially accurate. Look at his specific calling from God in [Acts 9:15](#). He was **to bear my name** (Jesus) **before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel**. Whom does that leave out? What are we supposed to be doing? (The Great Commission) Many years have gone by now and Paul is still focused on that calling. God wanted Paul to preach the Gospel in Rome ([Acts 23:11](#)) and he gets him there courtesy of the Roman authorities. Over the next couple of years of Paul’s life, during a prolonged prison stay, before he is martyred, he has a lot of time to reflect on his decisions. What would be going through your mind? Regrets? Not Paul! In the midst of seeming chaos, two things kept Paul going. The first was his single-minded focus on his mission. Even when confronting King Agrippa, Paul never blinked ([Acts 26:20, 28-29](#)). The second was the intervention of the Holy Spirit. Several times, God miraculously changed the course of events ([Acts 27:33-34, 44; 28:1-10](#)). In the end, Paul accomplished exactly what God wanted.

Key thought: God has a purpose for us and He will help us carry it out

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Acts 25-28 (Author = Luke)

### Acts 25

#### Paul Appeals to Caesar

**1 Now when Festus had come to the province, after three days he went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem. 2 Then the high priest and the chief men of the Jews informed him against Paul; and they petitioned him, 3 asking a favor against him, that he would summon him to Jerusalem—while they lay in ambush along the road to kill him.** [Paul has been in prison for over two years. This was in violation of Roman law for a Roman citizen who had no charge proven against him.] **4 But Festus answered that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself was going there shortly. 5 “Therefore,” he said, “let those who have authority among you go down with me and accuse this man, to see if there is any fault in him.”**

**6 And when he had remained among them more than ten days, he went down to Caesarea. And the next day, sitting on the judgment seat, he commanded Paul to be brought. 7 When he had come, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood about and laid many serious complaints against Paul, which they could not prove** [they needed just two people to corroborate their stories and after two

years, they still can't get any valid charge to stick to Paul], **8 while he answered for himself, "Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I offended in anything at all."**

**9 But Festus, wanting to do the Jews a favor, answered Paul and said, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and there be judged before me concerning these things?"**

**10 So Paul said, "I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged.** [It was under Roman authority that Paul was imprisoned and held for two years. He was awaiting Roman judgment. Paul knew the Jewish leadership only wanted to kill him and no justice could be served by turning him over to them. He was not looking to be martyred.] **To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you very well know.**

**11 For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying; but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. I appeal to Caesar."** [His right as a Roman citizen and only alternative to death at the hand of the Jews]

**12 Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, "You have appealed to Caesar? To Caesar you shall go!"**

### **Paul Before Agrippa**

**13 And after some days King Agrippa** [This was another Herod. His great-grandfather tried to kill the baby Jesus. His grandfather killed John the Baptist. His father killed James and numerous disciples.] **and Bernice** [sister and incestuous partner of Agrippa] **came to Caesarea to greet Festus. 14 When they had been there many days, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying: "There is a certain man left a prisoner by Felix, 15 about whom the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, when I was in Jerusalem, asking for a judgment against him. 16 To them I answered, 'It is not the custom of the Romans to deliver any man to destruction before the accused meets the accusers face to face, and has opportunity to answer for himself concerning the charge against him.' 17 Therefore when they had come together, without any delay, the next day I sat on the judgment seat and commanded the man to be brought in. 18 When the accusers stood up, they brought no accusation against him of such things as I supposed, 19 but had some questions against him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who had died, whom Paul affirmed to be alive** [Paul has witnessed to Festus and Felix before him]. **20 And because I was uncertain of such questions, I asked whether he was willing to go to Jerusalem and there be judged concerning these matters. 21 But when Paul appealed to be reserved for the decision of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I could send him to Caesar."**

**22 Then Agrippa said to Festus, "I also would like to hear the man myself."**

**"Tomorrow," he said, "you shall hear him."**

**23 So the next day, when Agrippa and Bernice had come with great pomp, and had entered the auditorium with the commanders and the prominent men of the city, at Festus' command Paul was brought in. 24 And Festus said: "King Agrippa and all the men who are here present with us, you see this man about whom the whole assembly of the Jews petitioned me, both at Jerusalem and here, crying out that he was not fit to live any longer. 25 But when I found that he had committed nothing**

deserving of death, and that he himself had appealed to Augustus, I decided to send him. 26 I have nothing certain to write to my lord concerning him. Therefore I have brought him out before you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after the examination has taken place I may have something to write. 27 For it seems to me unreasonable to send a prisoner and not to specify the charges against him.” [The Jews want Paul dead, but Paul has requested to stand before Caesar. Festus has now delayed, for weeks at least, holding Paul because no formal charge worthy of reporting in a Roman court has been leveled.]

## Acts 26

### Paul's Early Life

1 Then Agrippa said to Paul, “You are permitted to speak for yourself.”

So Paul stretched out his hand and answered for himself [Paul witnesses to Agrippa and Bernice]: 2 “I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because today I shall answer for myself before you concerning all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, 3 especially because you are expert in all customs and questions which have to do with the Jews. Therefore I beg you to hear me patiently.

4 “My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know. 5 They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. 6 And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers. 7 To this *promise* our twelve tribes, earnestly serving *God* night and day, hope to attain. For this hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews. 8 Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?

9 “Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against *them*. 11 And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled *them* to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted *them* even to foreign cities.

### Paul Recounts His Conversion

12 “While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, 13 at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me. 14 And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? *It is hard for you to kick against the goads.*’ 15 So I said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. 16 But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. 17 I will deliver you from the *Jewish* people, as well as *from* the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, 18 to open their eyes, *in order* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.’

### Paul's Post-Conversion Life

**19** “Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, **20** but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance. **21** For these reasons the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill *me*. **22** Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come— **23** that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the *Jewish* people and to the Gentiles.”

### Agrippa Parries Paul's Challenge

**24** Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, “Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!” [Festus has now heard multiple times the Gospel and has totally rejected it]

**25** But he said, “I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason. **26** For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner. **27** King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe.”

**28** Then Agrippa said to Paul, “You almost persuade me to become a Christian [conviction].”

**29** And Paul said, “I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains.”

**30** When he had said these things, the king stood up, as well as the governor and Bernice and those who sat with them; **31** and when they had gone aside, they talked among themselves, saying, “This man is doing nothing deserving of death or chains.”

**32** Then Agrippa said to Festus, “This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.” [Agrippa proclaims Paul innocent, but “He is your problem, not mine”]

## Acts 27

### The Voyage to Rome Begins

**1** And when it was decided that we should sail to Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to *one* named Julius, a centurion of the Augustan Regiment. **2** So, entering a ship of Adramyttium, we [at least Luke, perhaps others are traveling with Paul on this prison ship] put to sea, meaning to sail along the coasts of Asia. Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, was with us. **3** And the next *day* we landed at Sidon. And Julius treated Paul kindly and gave *him* liberty to go to his friends and receive care. **4** When we had put to sea from there, we sailed under *the shelter of* Cyprus, because the winds were contrary. **5** And when we had sailed over the sea which is off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, *a city* of Lycia. **6** There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing to Italy, and he put us on board.



**7** When we had sailed slowly many days, and arrived with difficulty off Cnidus, the wind not permitting us to proceed, we sailed under *the shelter of Crete* off Salmone. **8** Passing it with difficulty, we came to a place called Fair Havens, near the city of Lasea.

### Paul's Warning Ignored

**9** Now when much time had been spent, and sailing was now dangerous because the Fast was already over, Paul advised them, **10** saying, "Men, I perceive that this voyage will end with disaster and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also our lives." **11** Nevertheless the centurion was more persuaded by the helmsman and the owner of the ship than by the things spoken by Paul. **12** And because the harbor was not suitable to winter in, the majority advised to set sail from there also, if by any means they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete opening toward the southwest and northwest, *and winter there.*

### In the Tempest

**13** When the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained *their* desire, putting out to sea, they sailed close by Crete. **14** But not long after, a tempestuous head wind arose, called Euroclydon. **15** So when the ship was caught, and could not head into the wind, we let *her* drive. **16** And running under *the shelter of* an island called Clauda, we secured the skiff with difficulty. **17** When they had taken it on board, they used cables to undergird the ship; and fearing lest they should run aground on the Syrtis Sands, they struck sail and so were driven. **18** And because we were exceedingly tempest-tossed, the next *day* they lightened the ship. **19** On the third *day* we threw the ship's tackle overboard with our own hands. **20** Now when neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest beat on *us*, all hope that we would be saved was finally given up.

**21** But after long abstinence from food, then Paul stood in the midst of them and said, "Men, you should have listened to me, and not have sailed from Crete and incurred this disaster and loss. **22** And now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. **23** For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve, **24** saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.' [Paul has been praying for these men] **25** Therefore take heart, men, for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me. **26** However, we must run aground on a certain island."

**27** Now when the fourteenth night had come, as we were driven up and down in the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sailors sensed that they were drawing near some land. **28** And they took soundings and found *it* to be twenty fathoms; and when they had gone a little farther, they took soundings again and found *it* to be fifteen fathoms. **29** Then, fearing lest we should run aground on the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern, and prayed for day to come. **30** And as the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship, when they had let down the skiff into the sea, under pretense of putting out anchors from the prow, **31** Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved." **32** Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the skiff and let it fall off. [The authority, accuracy, and honesty of Paul's words are now obeyed without question. How much authority does our word have when we speak?]



**33** And as day was about to dawn, Paul implored *them* all to take food, saying, “Today is the fourteenth day you have waited and continued without food, and eaten nothing [the crew has been battling this storm for at least two weeks without food and little rest]. **34** Therefore I urge you to take nourishment, for this is for your survival, since not a hair will fall from the head of any of you.” **35** And when he had said these things, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all; and when he had broken *it* he began to eat. **36** Then they were all encouraged, and also took food **themselves**. [Paul's words and actions bring comfort and peace to others. How well do I do?] **37** And in all we were two hundred and seventy-six persons on the ship. **38** So when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship and threw out the wheat into the sea. [They trusted Paul's word, thus trusted God and His Word. With total trust, brings action and commitment. (Testimony – Plan B) Complete trust in God's word means not to prepare for the, “What if.”]

### Shipwrecked on Malta

**39** When it was day, they did not recognize the land; but they observed a bay with a beach, onto which they planned to run the ship if possible. **40** And they let go the anchors and left *them* in the sea, meanwhile loosing the rudder ropes; and they hoisted the mainsail to the wind and made for shore. **41** But striking a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the prow stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern was being broken up by the violence of the waves. **42** And the soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim away and escape. **43** But the centurion, wanting to save Paul, kept them from *their* purpose [Can you see the hand of God?], and commanded that those who could swim should jump *overboard* first and get to land, **44** and the rest, some on boards and some on *parts* of the ship. And so it was that they all escaped safely to land [again the hand of God].

## Acts 28

### Paul's Ministry on Malta

**1** Now when they had escaped, they then found out that the island was called Malta. **2** And the natives showed us unusual kindness; for they kindled a fire and made us all welcome, because of the rain that was falling and because of the cold. **3** But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid *them* on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand. **4** So when the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, “No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the sea, yet justice does not allow to live.” **5** But he shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm [the hand of God]. **6** However, they were expecting that he would swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had looked for a long time and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.

**7** In that region there was an estate of the leading citizen of the island, whose name was Publius, who received us and entertained us courteously for three days. **8** And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him. **9** So when this was done, the rest of those on the island who had diseases also came

and were healed. **10** They also honored us in many ways; and when we departed, they provided such things as were necessary.

### Arrival at Rome

**11** After three months we sailed in an Alexandrian ship whose figurehead was the Twin Brothers, which had wintered at the island. **12** And landing at Syracuse, we stayed three days. **13** From there we circled round and reached Rhegium. And after one day the south wind blew; and the next day we came to Puteoli, **14** where we found brethren, and were invited to stay with them seven days. And so we went toward Rome. **15** And from there, when the brethren heard about us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum and Three Inns. When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage.

**16** Now when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard; but Paul was permitted to dwell by himself with the soldier who guarded him.

### Paul's Ministry at Rome

**17** And it came to pass after three days that Paul called the leaders of the Jews together [**Romans 1:16b**: for the Jew first and also for the Greek]. So when they had come together, he said to them: "Men *and* brethren, though I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans, **18** who, when they had examined me, wanted to let *me* go, because there was no cause for putting me to death. **19** But when the Jews spoke against *it*, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar, not that I had anything of which to accuse my nation. **20** For this reason therefore I have called for you, to see *you* and speak with *you*, because for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain." [This was not an, "Unfortunate event," it was again an opening provided by God to reach more; specifically Jews here]

**21** Then they said to him, "We neither received letters from Judea concerning you, nor have any of the brethren who came reported or spoken any evil of you. **22** But we desire to hear from you what you think; for concerning this sect, we know that it is spoken against everywhere."

**23** So when they had appointed him a day, many came to him at *his* lodging, to whom he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening. **24** And some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved. [Some will believe, and some will not. Our job is not to, "win," but to tell.] **25** So when they did not agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had said one word: "The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers, **26** saying,

'Go to this people and say:

"Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand;

And seeing you will see, and not perceive;

**27** For the hearts of this people have grown dull.

*Their* ears are hard of hearing,

And their eyes they have closed,

Lest they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears,

**Lest they should understand with *their* hearts and turn,  
So that I should heal them.”**

**28 “Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!” 29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed and had a great dispute among themselves.**

**30 Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, 31 preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.** [Still under arrest and awaiting trial in another couple of years, but Paul never quits witnessing. There are no o second-guessing or regrets shown.]

Challenge: Once you find your God-given purpose in life, do not let anything deter you from pursuing it. The enemy will do anything to stop you, discourage you, and they hope to make you quit. Unfortunately, far too many have quit before they started. In the words of Winston Churchill, “Never, never, never give in!”

### **Apply (What is the point?)**

1. Tough, out of our control circumstances arise
2. God is always there and always active, whether we see Him or not
3. Paul stayed faithful to his calling

### **Personalize (What do I do with that?)**

1. Do not let the circumstances control you. Lean on God and His Word.
2. Seek God. Look for His hand in what you are going through—whether good or bad.
3. Be faithful to what He has called you to do. You may not know what He has planned for you in the big picture or long term/down the road, but you can stay faithful now: in the choir, in the nursery, listening to kids quote verses in AWANA, setting up tables and chairs for classes, etc. Keep moving forward looking for opportunities or doors to walk through. Let God open and close the doors. Whatever your lot is right now, “Never, never, never give up!”

# The Essential 100

---

## A Bible overview plan for 2011-2012

The Essential 100 (E100) is a systematic approach that guides readers through the big picture of the Bible. It is a carefully selected list of short Bible passages—50 from the Old Testament and 50 from the New Testament. Each testament is broken up into ten, five-week series. We will move from Old to New Testaments every five weeks. My goal is to teach three of the five lessons in every series.

The E100 in Sunday school: We will REAP (read, explain, apply, and personalize) one passage each week and finish a series every five weeks. Each lesson will include a key verse for memorization. At the end of two years, we will have covered the essential 100 passages in the Bible.

Additional information: To learn more about The E100 program and to obtain additional resources, visit [e100challenge.com](http://e100challenge.com). Our Sunday school website is [stuartheights.org/sundayschool](http://stuartheights.org/sundayschool).

## The Schedule: Letters to the Early Church

This is our seventh five-week series in the New Testament. So far, we have looked at The Early Years of Jesus, The Teachings of Jesus, the Miracles of Jesus, The Final Days of Jesus, The Church is Born, and The Travels of Paul.

Date	Lesson	Key Verse(s)	Passage	Speaker
April 22	More than Conquerors	Romans 8:28	Romans 8	Jim Fleming
April 29	The Fruit of the Spirit	Galatians 5:22-23	Galatians 5:16-6:10	David Barber
May 6	The Armor of God	Ephesians 6:10-11	Ephesians 6:10-20	Jim Fleming
May 13	Rejoice in the Lord	Philippians 4:4	Philippians 4:4-9	Amy Valovcin
May 20	A Description of Jesus	Colossians 1:17-18	Colossians 1:1-23	Jim Fleming

# Letters to the Early Church: More than Conquerors

---

## Early Letters

Paul's letter to the Romans was written around 55-57 AD and it was written in Greek. There were a few types of Greek at that time and Paul's Greek was **koine** Greek (the common Greek spoken by everyday people). Writing materials were expensive (vellum was the best—you probably had the vellum option for your wedding and graduation announcements, but most of the New Testament was written on reed paper—cheap stuff that did not last long). Since it was expensive, every part of the page mattered, so spaces between words were removed and there was no punctuation. **Romans 8:1** would have looked something like this: OUDENARANUNKATAKRIMATOIVENXRISTWIHSOUMHKATASARKA PERIPATOUSINALLAKATAPNEUMA

## Review

In our two-year study, three of the five-week series revolve around the actions of **Paul**. The last series, The Travels of Paul, we saw Paul's heartbeat and passion for starting and encouraging new churches. In this five-week series, we see Paul's letters to the early church. In the next five-week series, we see Paul's letters to the early church leaders. Paul was passionate about the church of Jesus Christ—he spent his entire life after his conversion starting, encouraging, and teaching them what God had taught him.

## Preview: Life Right Now

Too often, Christians paint the major selling point of Christianity as heaven. True, heaven will be more than we can possibly imagine, Jesus offers a victorious life right now. As you read Paul's letters, Paul focused far more on the life here than the life hereafter. For Paul, Christianity was a **'right now'** help because of the active, ever-working, and powerful work of the Holy Spirit of God in our lives.

Jesus overcame sin and death and then gave us a new Spirit (**Romans 8:1-4**). In addition, Paul reminds us that we are controlled either by our sinful nature, or by the Holy Spirit (**Romans 8:5-17**). Being controlled by the Spirit does not mean life will always be easy or successful, but God will use everything, even bad things, for your ultimate good if you belong to Him. You can be sure God loves you and is in charge of your life. That is what makes you more than a conqueror (**Romans 8:37**). It is God's fight.

Key thought: A Spirit-controlled life is the greatest life of all and will help right now

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Romans 8 (Author = Paul)

### Free from Indwelling Sin

**1 There is therefore now no condemnation** [courtroom sentence; there are dozens of lawyer references in **Romans** because **Romans** is Paul's letter from a lawyerly perspective] **to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.** **2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free** [in the aorist tense meaning free at all times] **from the law of sin and death.** [Christians are not under the **Law**] **3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,** **4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.** [The Old Testament Law was insufficient because it relied on the flesh. The New Testament construct relies on the Spirit of God.] **5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.** **6 For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace.** [You can die right now or you can live right now—the choice is yours.] **7 Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.** **8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot** [literally, has no power to] **please God.** [Example: Caleb vs J Jones]

**Manson: Moses' law has right but not might. Sin's law has might but not right. The law of the Spirit has both right and might.**

**9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you** [Paul leaves no room for a Christian to continually dwell in the flesh]. **Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ,**

he is not His [the salvation **package** comes with the Holy Spirit]. **10 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness** [Christians are dead men and women walking]. **11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you** [somehow we are both alive and dead at the same time—alive in Christ and dead to ourselves].

### Sonship through the Spirit

**12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.** [David Guzik: Paul constantly reminds us that living after the flesh ends in *death* and we need the reminder because we are often deceived into thinking that the flesh offers us *life*.] **14 For as many as are led [present tense] by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God** [We spend far too much time trying to determine if we were saved at some point in the past when Paul is only concerned with the ‘now’ analysis—are you saved right now? **Am I being led by the Spirit of God right now?**]. **15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”** [David Guzik: Under Roman adoption, the life and standing of the adopted child changed completely. The adopted son lost all rights in his old family and gained all new rights in his new family; the old life of the adopted son was completely wiped out, with all debts being canceled, with nothing from his past counting against him any more.] **16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.** [Again, we see this package deal expanded—this time to include sonship with God and brotherhood with Christ]

### From Suffering to Glory

**18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; 21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God** [i.e., the world is jacked up right now but it will be fixed]. **22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now** [this is why there are natural disasters, pain, anguish, sorrow, and grief in the world—because this world was not meant to coexist with **sin** and sin has hideous side effects]. **23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. 24 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.**

**26 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings [or sighs] which cannot be uttered.** [Have you ever been there? **Have you ever not known what to pray?** The Holy Spirit is the prayer **caulk** in our lives—He fills in the gaps when we do not know how to pray as we should.] **27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.**

**28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.** [Somehow, God takes the mess that we have made and the world that is recoiling from sin and works it for our good.] **29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.** [The salvation package now includes looking like **Jesus**]

Paul now switches gears and moves into the 'so what' phase of this chapter. So what does it matter that the salvation package includes the Holy Spirit, sonship with God, brotherhood with Christ, and looking like Jesus? It makes all the difference!

### God's Everlasting Love

**31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies** [i.e., no one can judge you because God has justified you—He has declared you righteous because of His work]. **34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us** [bonus round: not only is the Holy Spirit praying for us, but **Jesus** is praying for us as well]. **35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written:**

**"For Your sake we are killed all day long;  
We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."**

**37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us** [we conquer because of **God**—not because of ourselves or our actions]. **38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.** [Amen!]

Challenge: Stop worrying about tomorrow and be filled with the Spirit right now and live life right now!

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. We are **not** under the Law
2. The Holy Spirit and Jesus are praying for us
3. God is the victory (the hero of our story)

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Live in the freedom and liberty found in Christ
2. Be like the Holy Spirit and Jesus and pray for others
3. Tell people about our **Hero**



# Letters to the Early Church: The Fruit of the Spirit

## Background on Galatians

### Where is Galatians?

Here is a picture of not only where **Galatians** sits in the New Testament, but in the whole of Scripture:

Old Testament (39 Books)			New Testament (27 Books)	
<b>Law (5)</b> Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	<b>Poetry (5)</b> Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon	<b>Major Prophets (5)</b> Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel	<b>Gospels (4)</b> Matthew Mark Luke John	<b>Letters to People (4)</b> 1 Timothy 2 Timothy Titus Philemon
<b>History (12)</b> Joshua Judges Ruth 1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 2 Kings 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah Esther	<b>Minor Prophets (12)</b> Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi		<b>History (1)</b> Acts	<b>Paul's Letters to Churches (9)</b> Romans 1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians <b>Galatians</b> Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians
			<b>General Letters (9)</b> Hebrews James 1 Peter 2 Peter 1 John 2 John 3 John Jude Revelation	

The entire Old Testament is a 4,000-year illustration of the fact that you cannot keep the Law and get to heaven on your own.

### Writings of Paul?

Letters to friends (Pastoral Epistles): written to privately straighten out and guide **pastors**/friends

Letters to churches (Epistles): written to publically straighten out and guide **churches**/doctrine

### Why was Paul writing to the Galatians?

Who were the Galatians? Made up of partially Jews (that converted to Christianity who were having a hard time letting go of the Law) and partially **Gentiles** (that converted to Christianity)



Point Paul addresses: False teachers called Judaizers were insisting that the Gentile Christians must be **circumcised** and abide by the ceremonial laws as given by Moses to be saved (think about how that church announcement would have gone over)

Exchange false doctrine (the gospel plus the **Law**) with true Christian liberty (our three points today)

The way this works today is: the gospel + baptism, or the gospel + the sacraments, or the gospel + works, but the reality that it is the gospel + 0 = salvation.

## Preview: Breaking it Down

There are three major parts to today's text:

1. Walking in the Spirit: **Galatians 5:16-24**
2. Bear and Share the Burdens: **Galatians 6:1-5**
3. Be Generous and Do Good: **Galatians 6:6-10**

Key thought: Christianity is not a list

**Galatians 1-4** resolve the faith alone issue and that sets up **Galatians 5-6**.

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Galatians 5:16-6:10 (Author = Paul)

False doctrine: do good, get **good**; do bad, get **bad** (not Scriptural—this is modern-day Christian culture)

### Walking in the Spirit

**16 I say then: Walk** [what your life is **known** for (i.e., your actions are speaking so loudly I cannot hear what you are saying)] **in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law** [if you are a believer, the Law has been fulfilled (therefore it is not necessary) for you through **Christ**].

**19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like** [this is not about this list, it is about this type of stuff]; **of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice** [life is known for . . . then you are not a believer] **such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.**

**22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control** [this is not about this list, it is about this type of stuff]. **Against such there is no law** [Paul is referencing back to the issue with the Judaizers: fruit is the result of what you are at the core]. **24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.**

### Bear and Share the Burdens

**1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken** [caught (as in a race) by a sin] **in any trespass, you who are spiritual** [someone **demonstrating** the spirit walk from **Galatians 5:16**—this is not a position in the church] **restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness** [because someone will be restoring me soon], **considering yourself lest you also be tempted.** **2 Bear one another's burdens** [Sunday mornings are group therapy], **and so fulfill the law of Christ.** **3 For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself** [Paul reminds them that they can just as easily go from, “**you who are spiritual**,” to “**overtaken in a trespass**”]. **4 But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.** **5 For each one shall bear his own load.**

### Be Generous and Do Good

**6 Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.**

**7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.** **8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life** [true, however, **timing** of the fulfillment is up to God]. **9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.** **10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.** [Part of walking in the Spirit and being a testimony to the world is doing good to all]

The rope represents our lives throughout eternity. The red end of the rope is our lives and we spend too much of it focused on the red part and not the black part of the rope. We must make decisions that are based on the other end of the rope and not just our end.

---

### Which end of the rope are we living for?

Challenge: Doing good is the right thing to do, so do good because the impact is everlasting

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. Christian liberty starts with right **doctrine**
2. Your walk talks loudest
3. Goal of spiritual discipline is restoration
4. God always fulfills all of His promises

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Know your doctrine and where you stand (faith + 0 = salvation)
2. Be known for your **walk**
3. Know when you are “**you who are spiritual**” and when you are “**overtaken in a trespass**”
4. Do **right**! (that is what we are here for)

# Letters to the Early Church: The Armor of God

---

## Review

This is week three of our five-week series, Letters to the Early Church. All five of these letters were written by Paul and they were written to small congregations in Asia in the first century AD.

## Background on Ephesus

In the first century AD, Ephesus was a significant seaport city with a population of ¼ million. Now, there is nothing there except miles of swampland where the harbor used to be.

## Temple of Artemis (Diana)

Ephesus was primarily known for the Temple of **Artemis**. The temple was described by Antipater of Sidon, the man who compiled the list of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, this way: I have set eyes on the wall of lofty Babylon on which is a road for chariots, and the statue of Zeus . . . and the hanging gardens, and the colossus . . . and the huge . . . pyramids . . . but when I saw the house of Artemis that mounted to the clouds, those other marvels lost their brilliancy, and I said, "Lo, apart from Olympus, the sun never looked on aught so grand."

The Temple of Artemis was an entirely marble structure that was 425 feet long by 220 feet wide with each of its 120 columns donated by a king. Only one of its columns still exists today and the rest of the temple structure is nothing but ruin. The temple was considered the banking hub of Asia Minor because of all of the commerce it brought in to worship the false god Artemis. Artemis had her own month named after her in this area and a huge celebration was held each year during that month.

The Temple of Artemis (then):



The Temple of Artemis (now):



The moral of that story? Be careful what you worship

### The Theatre at Ephesus

One of the lesser-known structures in Ephesus was their **theatre**. Seating capacity estimates start at 25,000, but it is believed to have been the largest outdoor theater in the world at that time. Originally intended for dramas, it was later used for gladiatorial combat under Roman rule.





## Church History

The church at Ephesus was started by **Paul** (you can read about that in **Acts 19**). Paul worked there himself later on and wrote two letters to a young pastor named Timothy who lived there (**1 Timothy** and **2 Timothy**). Paul also wrote **1 Corinthians** from Ephesus. Church tradition says that after John the Revelator wrote **Revelation** he went to Ephesus and lived the rest of his life.

## Outline

**Ephesians 1-3:** What God has **done**

**Ephesians 4-6:** What we should **do**

### Ephesians 1

- Greeting (**1-2**)
- Redemption in Christ (**3-14**)
- Prayer for Spiritual Wisdom (**15-23**)

### Ephesians 3

- The Mystery Revealed (**1-7**)
- Purpose of the Mystery (**8-13**)
- Appreciation of the Mystery (**14-21**)

### Ephesians 5

- Walk in Love (**1-7**)
- Walk in Light (**8-14**)
- Walk in Wisdom (**15-21**)
- Marriage—Christ and the Church (**22-33**)

### Ephesians 2

- By Grace through Faith (**1-10**)
- Brought Near by Blood (**11-13**)
- Christ Our Peace (**14-18**)
- Christ Our Cornerstone (**19-22**)

### Ephesians 4

- Walk in Unity (**1-6**)
- Spiritual Gifts (**7-16**)
- The New Man (**17-24**)
- Do Not Grieve the Spirit (**25-32**)

### Ephesians 6

- Children and Parents (**1-4**)
- Bondservants & Masters (**5-9**)
- Whole Armor of God (**10-20**)
- A Gracious Greeting (**21-24**)

## Preview: The Fight of Your Life

As Paul finishes his letter to the Ephesians, he gives the Ephesians directions for living in a city that is dedicated to idolatry. Paul reminds the Ephesians that the devil is real and that he is opposing and scheming against God and against us. This is not an analogy to portray a spiritual concept—this is real warfare. **David Guzik: We must live in light of the fact that just as much as, “God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life,” so it is true that, “Satan hates you and has a terrible plan for your life.”** God has given us weapons to survive in the spiritual battle and we are to wear and use them.

Key thought: Put it **on**

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Ephesians 6:10-20 (Author = Paul)

### The Whole Armor of God

**10 Finally, my brethren, be strong** [an imperative] **in the Lord and in the power of His might.** **11 Put on** [an imperative that we are commanded to do ourselves—we are responsible for dressing ourselves] **the whole armor of God** [If there was ever a New Testament writer that could claim knowledge of armor (specifically Roman armor), it would be Paul—he was chained to a Roman soldier for three years. **Who is right? Barnes: “The [whole] armor of God” is not that which God wears, but that which He has provided for the Christian soldier** or **David Guzik: This armor is of God both is the sense that it is from Him, and in the sense that it is His actual armor. In the Old Testament, it is the LORD who wears the armor (Isaiah 59:17).], that you may be able to stand against the wiles** [practiced **deceit**] **of the devil.** **12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against**

the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. **13 Therefore take up** [an imperative; Jamieson, Fausset, Brown: “Make,” God has done that: you have only to “take up” and put it on. The Ephesians were familiar with the idea of the gods giving armor to mythical heroes: thus Paul’s allusion would be appropriate.] **the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand** [resist] **in the evil day, and having done all, to stand** [specifically, standing face to face with an enemy—but this is standing **after** wrestling—and only the victor is left standing at the end. Paul is incredibly encouraging in talking about the victorious stance of the believer.].

**14 Stand therefore** [an imperative], **having** [David Guzik: The order in which the pieces of armor are described is the order in which the soldier would put them on] **girded your waist with truth** [John Wesley: That ye may be ready for every **motion**], **having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod** [bound under; Wood: the military successes both of Alexander the Great and of Julius Caesar were due in large measure to their armies’ being well shod and thus able to undertake long marches at incredible speed over rough terrain] **your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace** [Adam Clarke: The Israelites were commanded to eat the Passover with their *feet shod*, to show that they were *ready* for their journey. And our Lord commands His disciples to be *shod with sandals*, that they might be ready to go and publish the Gospel. Jamieson, Fausset, Brown: beautiful contrast to the raging of the outward **conflict**]; **16 above all, taking the shield** [there were many types of shields in this time period, but the Greek word used here clearly describes a **body**-length shield (4-4.5 feet tall and 2.5 feet wide made of wood or metal and overlaid with skins)] **of faith with which you will be able** [able because you are equipped] **to quench all** [how many?] **the fiery darts** [anything in size from a missile, dart, javelin, to an arrow] **of the wicked one. 17 And take** [an imperative] **the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; 18 praying always** [literally, at every **opportunity**] **with all prayer** [a kind of prayer that is general in nature] **and supplication** [a kind of prayer that asks for things until they are accomplished] **in the Spirit, being watchful** [alert, awake, aware of what is going on] **to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints— 19 and for me, that utterance may be given** [the tense is the optative tense: it is only used when to express a desire for an action to occur in which the completion of the action is **doubtful**] **to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains** [technicality: the Greek is singular—implying that Paul was chained to a single guard and not to two guards as in **Acts 12:6** and **Acts 21:33** (bound with two chains between two guards)]; **that in it I may speak boldly** [free and fearless confidence, cheerful courage, boldness, assurance], **as I ought to speak** [David Guzik: *We could imagine Paul asking for many things, such as relief from his imprisonment or other comforts. But his heart and mind are fixed on his responsibility as an ambassador of the gospel.*].

Challenge: You are in a battle. Get ready to fight. Put it on. Prepare to win.

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. No matter how bad the circumstances, fight
2. **Use** what God has given you
3. **Pray, pray more and when you are done praying, keep on praying! (Esther Archer)**

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Fight it out (because we are more than conquerors)
2. Put it on
3. Keep **praying**

# Letters to the Early Church: Rejoice in the Lord

---

## Review

The first time that Paul and Silas were in Philippi, they were beaten and imprisoned after they drove out a demon from a slave girl ([Acts 16:11-40](#)). After being put in prison, Paul and Silas, from their shackles, sang hymns and prayed to God. While singing and, “rejoicing in the Lord,” an earthquake shook the prison doors open and caused the chains to fall off the prisoners.

## Preview

**Philippians** is a letter written by Paul to the church at Philippi. Paul started the church at Philippi during his second missionary journey. The church at Philippi had sent Paul a gift and he was writing them to tell them **thank you** ([Philippians 4:10-11](#)). He is writing to encourage them in their faith ([Philippians 1:27-39](#)). He is urging them to stay together ([Philippians 2:3-4](#)). He is writing them telling them to stay strong in the faith and to rejoice in all God has done ([Philippians 4:4](#)).

Key thought: God has a plan. Rejoice in it!

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Philippians 4:4-9 (Author = Paul)

### 4 Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!

Rejoice (or a word similar) is used about **16** times in this short letter to Philippi. Paul is telling us, not really making it an option, but pleading for us to rejoice. This letter tells the church at Philippi to Rejoice, to be glad, to be joyful. When I think of joy, I think singing, smiling faces, shouting, dancing, and raised hands.

The **Psalms** are full of joy: [Psalm 98:4](#); [100:2](#); [105:3](#); [118:24](#)

Rejoicing is a **command** given to all Christians. Joy is listed as fruit of the Spirit, meaning it should be evident in our lives. We can rejoice in who the Lord is and for what the Lord has done. We can rejoice in His love for us, rejoice in His sacrifice, and in His sovereignty. As Christians, we can rejoice through our pain. We can call out to our Savior even in pain and rejoice that God is God and that He is in control. No matter the circumstance, God’s hand is on it and we can always rejoice in that. Not rejoice because of the pain, but rejoice that God is holding us through the pain.

### 5 Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.

Gentleness is another fruit that Paul is calling us to show in our lives. Gentleness shows others Christ in you. Paul is telling us to pray and seek the Lord always and not to know worry, or be anxious for anything, but to have faith in the Lord.

**Dennis Kizziar: Nothing is too great for God’s power, and nothing is too small for His **fatherly care**.**

We can take everything to our Father. Jim has mentioned before coming to the Father and not knowing what to pray, that our hearts are so full/broken we do not know what to say.



One of my new favorite songs is about pouring your heart out to God. As it plays, I ask that you listen to the heartfelt words in this letter to God.

It is our full submission in God that allows us to have peace. Peace that God is in control and that He has a plan.

Paul also says to pray with **thanksgiving**. We can thank God for everything in our lives. Thankful that through prayer we are giving the opportunity to come before the throne of the Almighty.

Song: Dear Mr God (by The Warren Brothers)

**6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**

### Meditate on These Things

**8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. 9 The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.**

**“Take heart, He will never leave you. Take heart, every boy and girl. Jesus told you this, in Him have peace. Take heart He’s overcome the world.” Mr. Scoggins, Walk to Emmaus**

Think on these things. We are to keep our minds focused on what is pure and lovely. Focusing on these things makes rejoicing in the Lord always an easier task. If our mind is full of things that are from the Lord, then rejoicing in Him comes easier.

We serve an amazing God! We serve a God who has a plan and a purpose for our lives. We serve a God who hears our prayers. We serve a God that loves us unconditionally. That is something to rejoice in!

Challenge: Where are you **standing**?

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. God always has a **plan**
2. Submit to His will
3. Find your peace in Him

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Pray always!
2. Seek Him always!
3. Rejoice always!

**Philippians 4:4: Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!**

# Letters to the Early Church: A Description of Jesus

---

## Review

In this series, we have looked at the letters that Paul wrote to the early church. We first looked at Paul's view that we are more than conquerors (**Romans 8**) because of what God has done for us. We then looked at the fruits of the Spirit (**Galatians 5-6**) because of what God has done for us. We then looked at the whole armor of God that we are to put on (**Ephesians 6**) because of what God has done for us. We then looked at rejoicing in the Lord (**Philippians 4**) because of what God has done for us. Today, we are going to look at a description of Jesus (**Colossians 1**) and see more of what God has done for us.

If I have said it once, I have said it 100 times—God is the **hero** of our story.

## Background on Colossae

Colossae was on the road from Ephesus to the Euphrates, so it was a merchant city. They were used to people coming in to their town, staying a short while, and leaving. Paul had probably never visited when he wrote **Colossians**. Epaphras was most likely the founder of the church there (or at least a church leader). Earthquakes were very common in this area and regularly did extensive damage.

**Holman Bible Dictionary: The region included a mixture of people native to the area, Greeks, Romans, and transplanted Jews**

Conclusion: Colossae was not somewhere you went—it was somewhere you went **through**.

## Background on Colossians

**Colossians** was written by Paul during his first Roman imprisonment. It was written to help them clarify what Christianity and the gospel are (Jesus is the mediator and Jesus plus nothing) in the face of **false** doctrine. **ATS Bible Dictionary: The epistle was written at the same time with that to the Ephesians, and was sent by the same bearer.** The first half of **Colossians** is doctrinal (what is the truth?) and the second half is how to live out that doctrine (what does that matter?).

**Holman Bible Dictionary: The purpose of the first two chapters was to correct the false teaching which had infiltrated the church.**

## Preview: Slip 'n Slide

How can we help Christians who are being pummeled with false doctrine? That is the challenge the Apostle Paul addressed in **Colossians**. Paul corrected their misunderstandings by going back to the heart of the Gospel: Jesus Christ. In **Colossians 1**, Paul communicates important truth about Jesus and then gives us the good news in concentrated form. Anyone struggling with false doctrine should be re-focused on **Jesus**.

Key thought: You had better start with Jesus

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Colossians 1:1-23 (Author = Paul)

### Greeting

**1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,**

**2 To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ *who are in Colosse*** [This letter, as was common at that time, would be read in other congregations as well (see [Colossians 4:16](#))—which is where we get our tradition of applying letters written to other congregations to us. In addition, it is very encouraging that Paul would take the time to write a letter to a small congregation like that one in Colossae. **Small** congregations are important, too.]:

**Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

### Their Faith in Christ

**3 We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love** [*agape* love] **for all the saints** [saints are Christians; love for some of the saints is easy—love for **all** of the saints is not; it is encouraging to note that their faith and love were so well-known that Paul knew of it from prison]; **5 because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, 6 which has come to you, as *it has* also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as *it is* also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth; 7 as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, 8 who also declared to us your love** [*agape* love] **in the Spirit.**

### Preeminence of Christ

**9 For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask** [to ask, beg, call for, crave, desire, require] **that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing** [growing] **in the knowledge of God** [Paul describes an **active** faith—not a passive membership. Colossians is like a fractal—if you zoom in on it, you will see the same pattern as if you zoom out: know the right thing, then do the right thing.]; **11 strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; 12 giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. 13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, 14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness** [literally, the ‘sending away’—like the Old Testament scapegoat—whose job it was to do one thing: not come **back** of sins. [C.S. Lewis (in the introduction to *The Screwtape Letters*): **There is no neutral ground in the universe.**]

**15 He is the image** [David Guzik: Image (the ancient Greek word *eikon*) expresses two ideas. First, *likeness*, as in the image on a coin or the reflection in a mirror. Second, *manifestation*, with the sense that God is fully revealed in Jesus.] **of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation** [Not the first one born, but the first in priority and in rank. Even the Jewish rabbis understood this: **Lightfoot: the ancient Rabbis called Yahweh Himself “Firstborn of the World”**]. **16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or**

principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. **17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. 18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.** [Many of you have heard me say (quoting Mark Driscoll, “It’s all about Jesus. It’s only about Jesus. It’s always about Jesus.” Well, let me add one more part to that. It all **started** with Jesus, too.)]

### Reconciled in Christ

**19 For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, 20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself** [not reconciling Himself to us, but reconciling us to Himself], **by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.** [Now Paul transitions to the, ‘so what,’ section for the Colossian believers.]

**21 And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled 22 in the body of His flesh through death** [Lori Drake: Typically, we like to think that, “God SO LOVED the world, that He,” did this, and this, and this. It is all wrapped up nice in this pretty little bow and it all happened because God loved me. This verse is talking about the same gospel, but points out that we were aliens and enemies and evil, and despite all this, God still sought to save us. It is **good** for us to be reminded of where we came from.], **to present you holy** [set apart for a special work], **and blameless** [morally without blemish—a ready sacrifice after a priest had inspected it], **and above reproach** [unaccusable] **in His sight— 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.**

Bruce: If the gospel teaches the final perseverance of the saints, it teaches at the same time that the saints are those who finally persevere—in Christ. Continuance is the test of reality.

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. It (creation) all started with Jesus
2. It (combating heresies) starts with Jesus
3. It (combating heresies) will always start with Jesus. **David Guzik: Knowing the real Jesus helps us to stay away from the counterfeit, no matter how it comes packaged.**

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Know Jesus
2. Know Jesus **well**
3. Know Jesus **now**

# The Essential 100

---

## A Bible overview plan for 2011-2012

The Essential 100 (E100) is a systematic approach that guides readers through the big picture of the Bible. It is a carefully selected list of short Bible passages—50 from the Old Testament and 50 from the New Testament. Each testament is broken up into ten, five-week series. We will move from Old to New Testaments every five weeks. My goal is to teach three of the five lessons in every series.

The E100 in Sunday school: We will REAP (read, explain, apply, and personalize) one passage each week and finish a series every five weeks. Each lesson will include a key verse for memorization. At the end of two years, we will have covered the essential 100 passages in the Bible.

Additional information: To learn more about The E100 program and to obtain additional resources, visit [e100challenge.com](http://e100challenge.com). Our Sunday school website is [stuartheights.org/sundayschool](http://stuartheights.org/sundayschool).

## The Schedule: Letters to the Early Church Leaders

This is our eighth five-week series in the New Testament. So far, we have looked at The Early Years of Jesus, The Teachings of Jesus, the Miracles of Jesus, The Final Days of Jesus, The Church is Born, The Travels of Paul, and Letters to the Early Church.

Date	Lesson	Key Verse(s)	Passage	Speaker
July 1	Elders and Deacons	1 Timothy 3:1-3	1 Timothy 3	Jim Fleming
July 8	The Love of Money	1 Timothy 6:10	1 Timothy 6:3-21	Justin Harness
July 15	God's Workman	2 Timothy 2:15	2 Timothy 2	David Barber
July 22	All Scripture is God-breathed	2 Timothy 3:16-17	2 Timothy 3:10-4:8	Lori Drake
July 29	The Coming of the Lord	1 Thess. 4:16-17	1 Thess. 4:13-5:11	Jim Fleming

## Letters to the Early Church Leaders: Elders and Deacons

---

### Review

We spent 20 weeks looking at Jesus, five weeks looking at how the church began, five more weeks examining how Paul spread the Gospel, and the last five weeks in the New Testament on excerpts from letters to the early church on topics ranging from behavior to belief. Now, we turn our attention to instructions written to the church's leadership.

Just yesterday, I received my updated voter registration card and noticed that I have at least seven different governmental levels of leadership above me. Whatever we feel about our leaders, they are placed above us for our benefit and for God's glory. We can help them lead well by being leadable.

## Preview: Human Resources

In today's lesson, we look at the job prerequisites for church leadership. Imagine your job description having been written 2,000 years ago. I have had many different job descriptions where I work and am currently undergoing a process to refine it further. Since job descriptions depend on specific words, we will spend much time today looking at the meanings of various words.

The New Testament uses many different **words** for the leadership positions that we will look at today. Just as various aspects of what you do on a regular basis can be described with different words, so the New Testament uses a variety of words (bishop, elder, presbyter, preacher, shepherd, steward, pastor, etc., and deacon, servant, etc.) to describe her leadership roles (see [Acts 20:17, 28](#) for an example).

**Lenski: Paul is not telling Timothy to arrange for these offices and to define their functions and their scope; such offices were already established and in use. Timothy is merely to see to it that only properly qualified persons fill them. . . . All of the qualifications listed except aptness to teach and that pertaining to a novice are requirements that apply to **all** Christians**

One other thing to keep in mind as we go through today's text. **1 Timothy** was among the **last** letters that Paul wrote and comes toward the end of his writing period. Paul is wiser and more experienced in the faith and his guidance under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, reflects a combination of knowledge, experience, and counsel. It can also appear that Paul contradicts earlier comments in other letters, but he is refining and clarifying these leadership positions.

Key thought: God has standards for His servants

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): 1 Timothy 3 (Author = Paul)

### Qualifications of Overseers

**1 This is a faithful saying: If a man desires** [to stretch one's self out in order to touch or to grasp something, to reach after or desire something; **Adam Clarke: It is strange that the episcopacy, in those times, should have been an object of intense desire to any man; when it was a place of danger, all exposure to severe labour, want, persecution, and death, without any secular emolument whatsoever] the position of a bishop** [investigation, inspection, visitation; oversight, overseership, office, charge, the office of an elder; the overseer or presiding officers of a Christian church; the idea is God's eyes in human form looking in to the laity's **business**; **Guzik: In Acts 20:17, we learn there were many bishops—that is, overseers—in one church in one city. Undoubtedly, these were men who had oversight over the many house-churches that met throughout the city. The idea of a “regional bishop” doesn't come from the Bible.**], **he desires** [a different Greek word, meaning to turn upon a thing to have a desire for, long for, to desire to lust after, covet] **a good** [beautiful, handsome, excellent, eminent, choice, surpassing, precious, useful, suitable, commendable, admirable] **work** [occupation; **Guzik: Spiritual leadership in the church isn't all about titles and honor and glory; it's about work**]. **2 A bishop** [overseer, superintendent, elder] **then must be** [present tense] **blameless** [**David Guzik: Sin is vertical, blameless is horizontal**; **Guzik: demonstrated by a track record of behavior**; many commentators lean toward a belief that all of the remaining qualifications are aspects of this one expectation], **the husband**

**of one wife, temperate** [sober, temperate], **sober-minded** [sound mind, sane, in one's senses curbing one's desires and impulses, self-controlled, temperate; **Wiersbe: This does not mean he has no sense of humor, or that he is always solemn and somber. Rather it suggests that he knows the value of things and does not cheapen the ministry or the Gospel message by foolish behavior.**], **of good behavior** [well arranged, seemly, modest; **Guzik: the same word translated *modest* in 1 Timothy 2:9**], **hospitable** [hospitable, generous to **guests**; **Adam Clarke: Hospitality, in those primitive times, was a great and necessary virtue; then there were few inns, or places of public entertainment; to those who were noted for benevolence the necessitous stranger had recourse**], **able to teach** [apt and skilful in teaching; **Coffman: The Christian life is a life of study and learning. Ill-informed elders are a contradiction in terms. Every elder should be able to shut the mouths of the gainsayers, shield the church from false teaching, and see to it that truth and truth alone is fed to their charges.**]; **3 not given to wine** [not given to wine, not drunken], **not violent** [not a bruiser, ready for a blow a pugnacious, contentious, or a quarrelsome person], **not greedy for money, but gentle** [seemingly, suitable equitable, fair, mild, gentle; **Guzik: The kind of man who takes Jesus as his example, not the latest action hero**], **not quarrelsome** [not to be withstood, invincible, not contentious, abstaining from fighting], **not covetous** [not loving money, not avaricious; this is broader than just referencing money; if this seems like a strange list so far, remember **People: We must always bear in mind that the church had been formed of Gentiles whose morals had been at a very low standard** (read: the church is made up of former **pagans**)—these lessons must continually be taught for we continually forget (and the next generation must know them well)]; **4 one who rules** [superintend, preside over, to be a protector or guardian, to give aid, to care for, give attention to] **his own house well** [beautifully, finely, excellently, well], **having his children in submission** [obedience] **with all reverence** [reverence and respect, dignity, majesty, sanctity, honor, purity] **5 (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?)** [**Guzik: Paul recognizes that it is in the home where our Christianity is first demonstrated**]; **6 not a novice** [new convert; **People: Paul and Barnabas did not ordain elders until their second visit to the churches (Acts 14:23)**], **lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil** [**Coffman: men of settled experience in living the Christian life should be chosen**]. **7 Moreover he must have a good** [beautiful, handsome, excellent, eminent, choice, surpassing, precious, useful, suitable, commendable, admirable] **testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.**

### Qualifications of Deacons

**8 Likewise deacons** [one who executes the commands of another, especially of a master, a servant, attendant, minister, the servant of a king, one who, by virtue of the office assigned to him by the church, cares for the poor and has charge of and distributes the money collected for their use, **waiters**, ones who serve food and drink] **must be reverent** [august, venerable, reverend, to be venerated for character, honorable], **not double-tongued** [double in speech, saying one thing with one person another with another (with the intent to deceive)], **not given** [applying, attaching, attending] **to much wine, not greedy for money** [eager for base gain, greedy for money], **9 holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience** [**Coffman: Paul made a great deal of the conscience; and, while a clear conscience does not prove one is right, an impure conscience most certainly proves one to be wrong. Barnes: A mere orthodox faith was not all that was necessary, for it was possible that a man might be**



**professedly firm in the belief of the truths of revelation, and yet be corrupt at heart.]. 10 But let these also first be tested** [to test, examine, prove, scrutinize (to see whether a thing is genuine or not), as metals, to recognize as genuine after examination, to approve, deem worthy]; **then let them serve as deacons** [to be a servant, attendant, domestic, to serve, wait upon], **being found blameless. 11 Likewise, their wives must be reverent** [august, venerable, reverend, to be venerated for character, honorable], **not slanderers** [prone to slander, slanderous, accusing falsely, false accuser, slanderer; the Greek is *diabolos*, literally, **devils**], **temperate** [sober, temperate, abstaining from wine], **faithful in all things** [talk about four incredibly hard words to live by—and four beautiful words to have written on one's tombstone]. **12 Let deacons be** [present tense] **the husbands of one wife, ruling** [superintend, preside over, to be a protector or guardian, to give aid, to care for, give attention to] **their children and their own houses well** [beautifully, finely, excellently, well]. **13 For those who have served well** [beautifully, finely, excellently, well; **Barnes: The sense would be well expressed by the phrase, deaconizing well**] **as deacons obtain** [reserve, preserve, purchase] **for themselves a good** [beautiful, handsome, excellent, eminent, choice, surpassing, precious, useful, suitable, commendable, admirable] **standing** [dignity and wholesome influence in the church; another step up] **and great boldness** [freedom in speaking, unreservedness in speech, openly, frankly, i.e., without concealment, without ambiguity or circumlocution, without the use of figures and comparisons, free and fearless confidence, cheerful courage, boldness, assurance] **in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.**

### The Great Mystery

**14 These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; 15 but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct** [conduct, behave, live] **yourself in the house of God, which is the church** [**Guzik: In Greek, church is a non-religious word for a group of people called together for a purpose**] **of the living God, the pillar and ground** [support] **of the truth.** [**Calvin: Paul will not acknowledge the Church except where God's truth is exalted and plain**] **16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:**

**God was manifested in the flesh,**

**Justified in the Spirit,** [**Guzik: declared to be, by the Holy Spirit, what He always was**]

**Seen by angels,**

**Preached among the Gentiles,**

**Believed on in the world,**

**Received up in glory.** [Paul is saying that the mystery of godliness is **Jesus**, so it should not surprise us that the prerequisites for leadership in the church look like Jesus looks]

Challenge: Embrace God's standards for laity and leadership (not perfection)

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. God has prerequisites for leadership and standards for His servants
2. God's prerequisites have not **changed**
3. God's prerequisites will not **change**

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Encourage and exhort my pastors in these prerequisites
2. Be **easy** to be overlooked (i.e., make it easy on my pastors to pastor me)
3. Train my children to fill these roles

# Letters to the Early Church Leaders: The Love of Money

---

## Preview: Been there, done that

One of my goals in this 100-week series was to have at least 10 different voices speaking to us. Today I complete that goal. You may not be a teacher and may be scared to death to speak, but you need to tell your story (and it does not have to be in Sunday school). However, it is important for you and it is important for others. After I do some setup for today's text, Justin Harness will tell his story (and, like all of our stories, it is not perfect and it is not finished) about how today's text has been true in his life. Today's text is at the end of **1 Timothy** and Paul is wrapping up all of his instructions to Timothy.

Key thought: There can be only **one** (God or money)

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): 1 Timothy 6:3-21 (Author = Paul)

### Error and Greed (3-10)

**3 If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome** [healthy from a doctrinal perspective] **words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness,** **4 he is proud** [smoke, wrapped in mist], **knowing nothing** [Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures: Ignorance is a frequent companion of conceit], **but is obsessed** [literally, morbidly sick; rhetorically, morbidly obsessed] **with disputes** [questions, debates] **and arguments over words** [literally, arguing over empty things that do not matter], **from which come envy, strife** [strife, contention; Adam Clarke: How little good have religious disputes ever done to mankind, or to the cause of truth!], **reviling** [slander, speech injurious to another's good name], **evil** [evil, annoying, hard] **suspensions,** **5 useless wranglings** [useless occupation, **empty** business; Barnes: The verb from which this is derived means *to rub in pieces, to wear away*; and hence the word here used refers to what was a mere *wearing away* of time. The idea is that of employments that merely consumed time without any advantage.] **of men of corrupt minds and destitute** [defrauded, robbed] **of the truth, who suppose** [literally, holding to customs] **that godliness is a means of gain** [acquisition; Guzik: In our day—a time when we are overwhelmed with useless information—it is easy to regard the Bible as useless information; as a source of answers to trivia questions, but not as a book with truth that confronts and transforms my life. Bible study is *not* trivial pursuit.]. **From such withdraw yourself** [an imperative meaning to cause to separate—the Joseph principle]. [Aside: for me to think that I have a better answer than what God Himself shows in His Word is folly. Challenge any word that comes out of any mouth that affronts Jesus. To borrow a phrase from Addison Road's song, *What Do I Know Of Holy?* "What do I know of You who spoke me into motion? Where have I even stood but the shore along Your ocean? . . . What do I know?" Anybody who thinks they can do better than Jesus is not worth listening to.]

Guzik: Very commonly, Christianity is presented today on the basis of what you will *gain* by following Jesus: personal success and happiness, a stronger family, a more secure life. These things may be true to some degree, but we must never "market" the gospel as a "product" that will "fix" these things in your life. . . . When the gospel is marketed this way, it makes followers of Jesus who are completely unprepared for tough times; after all, if the "Jesus product" isn't working, why not try another brand?

**6 Now godliness with contentment** [no aid or support is needed, a mind content with its lot] **is great gain** [acquisition; **Adam Clarke: It requires but little of this world's goods to satisfy a man who feels himself to be a citizen of another country, and knows that this is not his rest**]. **7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain** [clear, evident, manifest] **we can carry nothing out** [**Guzik: A heart of contentment begins with seeing our material possessions and resources in an eternal perspective. . . Gold is a precious commodity on earth; in heaven God uses it to pave the streets!**]. **8 And having food and clothing** [literally, 'covering,' implying both clothing and lodging], **with these we shall be content** [suffice, be enough, be satisfied]. **9 But those who desire** [deliberate, having purpose] **to be rich** [using Paul's definition, anyone that has enough to eat and enough to cover themselves; **John Wesley: the very desire banishes content, and exposes them to ruin**] **fall** [not, 'may fall,' not, 'might fall,' not, 'could fall,' but simply, 'fall'—it will happen—if you chase riches, you will fall] **into temptation and a snare** [snare, **trap**, noose; Admiral Ackbar; an animal does not understand that what they are focused on is about to kill them], **and into many foolish and harmful** [hurtful, injurious] **lusts** [desires, cravings, longings, desires for what is forbidden] **which drown** [drag to the bottom] **men in destruction** [ruin, destroy, death] **and perdition** [utter destruction of a thing or person—used in the New Testament of love of money and of hell]. **10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil** [**Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures: Surely men today need no proof of the fact that men and women will commit any sin or crime for money** (1931)], **for which some have strayed from the faith** [**John Wesley: They aimed not at faith, but at something else**] **in their greediness** [to stretch one's self out], **and pierced themselves through** [to torture your soul—these are **self**-inflicted wounds] **with many sorrows** [consuming grief, pain, sorrow]. [The one that desires to be rich is fallen in temptation, broken in a trap, experiencing injurious cravings, drowning in utter destruction, straying from the faith, and torturing his soul with consuming sorrow, pain, and grief. The stuff that dirty, colored paper can buy is not worth the cost here or the cost hereafter.]

### The Good Confession (11-16)

**11 But you, O man of God, flee** [an imperative, to flee away, seek safety by flight, to escape safely out of danger] **these things and pursue** [an imperative, meaning to run swiftly in order to catch a person or thing] **righteousness, godliness, faith, love** [Greek, *agape*, seeking the highest good of another (not self)], **patience** [steadfastness, constancy, endurance], **gentleness** [gentleness, mildness, meekness]. **12 Fight** [an imperative, to enter a contest: contend in the gymnastic games] **the good fight** [arena, stadium] **of faith, lay hold on** [an imperative, to lay hold of, take possession of, overtake, attain, attain to, get a grip on] **eternal life** [**Who was Paul writing this to?** Timothy. **Coffman: But was not Timothy already saved? Indeed he was, but the New Testament makes it starkly clear that fidelity on the part of Christians is also required of them if they really hope to enter heaven at last.** The proof of our faith comes at the end of our lives.], **to which you were also called and have confessed** [said the same thing] **the good confession in the presence of many witnesses** [Greek, *martus* (mar-TOOS)—this probably refers to Timothy's baptism]. **13 I urge** [command, order] **you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, 14 that you keep** [an imperative, attend carefully, take care] **this commandment without spot, blameless** [untouchable (can't touch this)] **until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, 15 which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16 who alone**

has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen.

### Instructions to the Rich (17-19)

**17 Command** [an imperative, command, order] **those who are rich** [see our earlier definition] **in this present age not to be haughty** [proud], **nor to trust** [hope] **in uncertain riches** [it is almost as if Paul knew how the stock market would work one day; **Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures: Riches have wings**] **but in the living God** [John Wesley: All the rest is dead clay], **who gives us richly** [abundantly, richly] **all things to enjoy** [Adam Clarke: God gives liberally; man divides it badly]. **18 Let them** [the rich—we are the **rich**] **do good** [to work good, to do good, to do well, act rightly], **that they be rich in good works** [business, occupation, job], **ready to give** [**liberal**]; **Harvey Penick's Little Red Book: People are always asking me to look at the calluses on their palms, as if the location and thickness of the calluses will tell me whether their grip is correct. I remember someone asking to see the calluses on Sam Snead's palms. Sam said, "I don't have any calluses." Sam said he holds the club as if it is a live bird in his hands, with just enough pressure that the bird can't fly away but not so tightly that the bird can't breathe. Grip the club this way and you won't have calluses, either. That's a great illustration of how to hold on to our wealth—very gently, allowing us to share.], **willing to share** [social, sociable, ready to form and maintain communion and fellowship], **19 storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.** [Guzik: Many think the main reason for giving unto the Lord is because the church needs money. No. The most important reason to give is because *you* need to be a giver. It is God's way of guarding you against greed and trust in uncertain riches. God will provide for His work even if you do not give; but what will happen to you?]**

### Guard the Faith (20-21)

**20 O Timothy! Guard what was committed** [a banking term ☺] **to your trust, avoiding the profane** [common, public places] **and idle babblings** [empty discussion, discussion of vain and useless matters] **and contradictions** [oppositions] **of what is falsely called knowledge— 21 by professing it some have strayed** [missed the mark] **concerning the faith. Grace be with you. Amen.** [Justin's testimony]

Challenge: **Where are you?** (in a relationship with God? running from God? running to God?)

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. **Justin Harness: Material gain does not produce contentment**
2. Loving money and things is both visible and invisible
3. We cannot do better without God. **Bethany Dillon's, Hallelujah: And only you can see the good, In broken things, You took my heart of stone and you made it home, And set this prisoner free.**

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. **Justin Harness: Our contentment is found in the absolute truth of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior**
2. Confess the visible and invisible sin and get accountable with a brother/sister
3. Ask God for help to hold your riches **lightly**

Recommended resource: John Wesley's sermon, [The Danger of Riches](#) (1872)

# Letters to the Early Church Leaders: God's Workman

## Introduction

1. How many M&Ms are in the jar? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What are your three favorite songs?

1.

2.

3.

## Preview: You can't handle the truth!

Key thought: The truth is always the issue

## Background on 2 Timothy

### Where is 2 Timothy?

Old Testament (39 Books)			New Testament (27 Books)	
Law (5)	Poetry (5)	Major Prophets (5)	Gospels (4)	Letters to People (4)
Genesis	Job	Isaiah	Matthew	1 Timothy
Exodus	Psalms	Jeremiah	Mark	2 Timothy
Leviticus	Proverbs	Lamentations	Luke	Titus
Numbers	Ecclesiastes	Ezekiel	John	Philemon
Deuteronomy	Song of Solomon	Daniel		
			History (1)	Paul's Letters to Churches (9)
History (12)			Acts	Romans
Joshua		Minor Prophets (12)		1 Corinthians
Judges		Hosea	General Letters (9)	2 Corinthians
Ruth		Joel	Hebrews	Galatians
1 Samuel		Amos	James	Ephesians
2 Samuel		Obadiah	1 Peter	Philippians
1 Kings		Jonah	2 Peter	Colossians
2 Kings		Micah	1 John	1 Thessalonians
1 Chronicles		Nahum	2 John	2 Thessalonians
2 Chronicles		Habakkuk	3 John	
Ezra		Zephaniah	Jude	
Nehemiah		Haggai	Revelation	
Esther		Zechariah		
		Malachi		

## New Testament Writings

Gospels – Story of Jesus

Acts – Establishment of the church (history)

Romans – Doctrine of the New Testament

Letters to People – Pastors/friends

Letters to the Early Church – Epistles addressing doctrine

General Letters – Written by others

- General issues
- End times ([Revelation](#))

## The Pastoral Epistles

**1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus** (**1 Timothy, Titus, 2 Timothy**) (Paul's last letter before his death—passing on his legacy as he thought he might never see Timothy again)

Paul is writing the letter from a prison in Rome (most have deserted Paul due to his imprisonment)

Paul is addressing the staying faithful to the truth (in the face of adversity and even when it does not “look” like it is right or winning)

Purpose of the pastor – Proclaim the truth (today: the definition of truth is being changed to the concept of tolerance)

## The Life of Paul

**2 Corinthians 11:23-28** speaks of the many trials Paul faced. He was:

- Put in prison over and over
- Flogged an uncounted number of times
- Faced death over and over
- Received 39 lashes from the Jews five times
- Beaten with rods three times
- Stoned one time
- Shipwrecked three times
- Spent a day and night in the sea
- Continual danger from rivers, robbers, his own people, and Gentiles
- Was in danger in the city, in the country, at sea, and from false brothers
- Was weary and in pain often, without sleep
- Often hungry and thirsty, cold, and naked
- And continually concerned about the health of all of the churches

Other things:

- His thorn in the flesh (most likely poor eyesight)
- Blind after meeting Jesus on the road to Damascus ([Acts 9:1-19](#))

Summary: your circumstances are not a reflection of your walk with Christ

## 2 Timothy

Salutation ([1:1-2](#))

Call to faithfulness ([1:3-18](#))

- Thanksgiving for Timothy ([1:3-7](#))
- Call to courage ([1:8-12](#))
- Call to guard the truth ([1:13-14](#))
- Examples of unfaithfulness and faithfulness ([1:15-18](#))

Be strong – pass on the Truth ([2:1-13](#)) (what is truth)

- Enduring hardship for Christ ([2:1-7](#))
- Christ's example of endurance ([2:8-10](#))
- A faithful saying ([2:11-13](#))

Dealing with false teachers ([2:14-26](#)) (who ain't)

- Faithfulness in ministry ([2:14-19](#))
- A clean instrument ([2:20-21](#))
- Faithfulness in conduct ([2:22-26](#))

Predictions of faithlessness ([3:1-9](#))

Challenge to faithful preaching ([3:10-4:8](#))

- Faithfulness in the face of opposition ([3:10-13](#))
- Faithfulness to God's Word ([3:14-4:5](#))
- Faithfulness of Paul ([4:6-8](#))

Reminder of God's faithfulness in Paul's adversity ([4:9-18](#))

- Paul's enemies and friends ([4:9-16](#))
- Paul's deliverance by the Lord ([4:17-18](#))

Final greetings ([4:19-22](#))

## Purpose of the church: SHBC

**Worship:** *You shall love the **LORD your God** with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind*

**Instruction:** **Teaching them** to observe all things that I have commanded you



Fellowship: **Baptizing them** in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

Evangelism: Go therefore and make disciples

Service: *You shall **love your neighbor** as yourself*

WIFE'S

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): 2 Timothy 2 (Author = Paul)

### Be Strong in Grace (Be strong—pass on Truth)

**1** You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. **2** And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. **3** You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. **4** No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. **5** And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. **6** The hardworking farmer must be first to partake of the crops. **7** Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things.

**8** Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel, **9** for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, *even* to the point of chains; but the word of God is not chained. **10** Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

**11** *This is a faithful saying:*

For if we died with *Him*,  
We shall also live with *Him*.

**12** If we endure,  
We shall also reign with *Him*.

If we deny *Him*,  
He also will deny us.

**13** If we are faithless,  
He remains faithful;  
He cannot deny Himself.

Command statements:

- Be strong in the grace
- Endure hardship
- Remember . . . Jesus Christ

Trustworthy saying:

- If we died, we live
- If we endure, we reign

- If we deny, He will deny
- If we are faithless, He is faithful

Summary: when you do the right thing, it does not always look good

### Illustrations

	Illustration	The Call	The Reward
<b>2:3</b>	A soldier	Suffer hardship	Please the One who enlisted you
<b>2:5</b>	An athlete	Follow the rules	Win the prize
<b>2:6</b>	A farmer	Work hard	Receive your share of the harvest
<b>2:15</b>	A workman	Accurately handle the Word	Be approved to God
<b>2:20</b>	A vessel	Be cleansed	Be useful to the Master
<b>2:24</b>	A servant	Be at peace	God may grant repentance to some

### Approved and Disapproved Workers (Deal with false teachers)

**14** Remind *them* of these things, charging *them* before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. **15** Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. **16** But shun profane *and* idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. **17** And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, **18** who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some. **19** Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

**20** But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. **21** Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. **22** Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. **23** But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. **24** And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, **25** in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, **26** and *that* they may come to their senses *and escape* the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to *do* his will.

Command statements:

- Remind [God's people] of these things
- Not to strive about words to no profit
- Present yourself approved to God
- Shun profane and idle babblings
- Flee . . . youthful lusts
- Pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace
- Avoid foolish and ignorant disputes

## Hymenaeus and Philetus

**1 Timothy 1:19** – “some” who had put away faith and a good conscience (who had made shipwreck concerning faith).

**1 Timothy 1:20** – I (Paul) have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

**2 Timothy 2:17-18** - Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have departed from the truth.

## How to Deal with Them

Yourself (first, deal with yourself)

- Flee: evil desires
- Pursue: righteousness, faith, love, and peace

How to approach them (then, deal with them)

- Do not have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments
- Do not be quarrelsome
- Gently instruct them

## Why is truth always under attack?

Implications – If there is truth, then we are accountable to it

Redefine – If you cannot combat truth, redefine it

Correct false teachers – in a spirit of gentleness

Godless chatter – distracts from the truth

Truth --> Faithfulness --> Jesus

God's truth is right all the time and everything else is wrong

## Apply (What is the point?)

1. Pass on the Truth – Jesus Christ
2. Avoid godless chatter
3. Let God win over opponents

Truth wins! It is worth it . . .

## Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Look at trials in the right light
2. Be known as a workman
3. It is always about the Truth

And it's going to get worse (**2 Timothy 3:1-9**) . . . but there is truth!

## Letters to the Early Church Leaders: All Scripture is God-breathed

---

### Preview:

It is the end of your life, you have only days left—maybe weeks. You are sitting alone with your thoughts, contemplating a lifetime of memories, and choices made—some ill conceived, some worthwhile. There is a pen and paper in your lap and you have on your heart a person who will remain after you are gone. Someone you love and hold dear. Someone you have walked through seasons of life with, just perhaps a few years ahead of them. Maybe it is a daughter or son, a spouse, a younger sibling, or grandchild. Perhaps someone you have mentored or adopted into your family. Maybe it is a best friend. You will be gone, they will remain, and you want to prepare them. You want to provide guidance, clarity, direction, advice. You do not want them to repeat your mistakes; you want them spared from pain and hardship, and to experience every possible success imaginable in their endeavors. So you start writing and there is no time to beat around the bush, time is slipping away and you want to get right to the point. So what is the most pressing instruction for you to pass on? What does it all boil down to? What have years of love and loss, success and failure, joy and heartache taught you? What would you say? What would be your legacy?

Paul is writing to Timothy, his “**son in the faith**” (**1 Timothy 1:2**), and **preparing** him for a life of ministry. I describe this text as being “beautifully straightforward,” as the English translation we have is in most places identical to what Paul wrote in the Greek. **MacArthur Study Bible: There are no major challenges in this letter involving theological issues**—not typical for Paul’s letters (just ask Peter in **2 Peter 3:16**).

Key thought: Believers must remain devoted to the truth of God’s Word

### Read & Explain (What does it mean?): 2 Timothy 3:10-4:8 (Author = Paul)

#### The Man of God and the Word of God (10-17)

**10 But you** [Timothy] **have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance** [i.e., I have practiced what I preached!], **11 persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—what persecutions I endured** [Paul has clearly been thinking back over his life—the highs and lows. These events are recorded in **Acts 13-14**. He is telling Timothy that he can trust his life—“You have watched me **live**!” Typically, when I am giving advice, it is because I have done it wrong, but Paul is boldly saying, “Because I have done this right!"]. **And out of them all the Lord** [*kurios*: NT Greek equivalent of OT Hebrew Jehovah, it focuses on God’s authority as master and owner] **delivered me. 12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution** [We will meet resistance and opposition if we choose to follow Jesus, if we are doing it right. But what is the other option? Being evil]. **13 But evil men** [wicked, corrupt] **and impostors** [Impostors are equally dangerous, those that look like, talk like, and act like Christians, but do not submit to the **lordship** of Christ. Example: Judas. **Was there a time in your life when you thought you were following Christ, but looking back, you saw no true evidence of saving faith? Maybe, going through the motions?**] **will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived** [**Driscoll: Initially deceived by Satan, then they deceive themselves (self-deception), which makes them more capable of**

deceiving others. “If I can fool me, then I can fool you.” What Dave Barber talked about last week: false teachers—they are alive and well within the church. John, Paul, Jude, and Peter frequently wrote of these men who crept in and infiltrated the church and corrupted the doctrine and gospel. **J. C. Ryle (1800’s Bishop): I believe that the widespread unbelief, indifference, formalism and wickedness, which are to be seen throughout Christendom, are only what we are taught to expect in God’s Word. Troublous times, departures from the faith, evil men waxing worse and worse, love waxing cold, are things distinctly predicted. So far from making me doubt the truth of Christianity, they help to confirm my faith. Melancholy and sorrowful as the sight is, if I did not see it I should think the Bible was not true.** **False teachings** in the early church: Judaizers, Gnosticism, Arianism, Sabellianism, and Modalism].

**14 But you must continue** [remain, abide] **in the things which you have learned** [“Have learned,” not, “have been learned”—just because Jim teaches, does not mean we learn. The listener must take an active role in the responsibility of learning. Example: Tony’s L&L] **and been assured of** [This takes it a step further: you have not only actively learned, but you are convinced by it! Anatomy book vs cadaver lab. How tightly do you hold to these truths? Knowledge versus conviction. **Gary Jared: Men will give their lives for the truth**], **knowing from whom you have learned them, 15 and that from childhood** [newborn, infant] **you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.** [Who taught Timothy? **Mother** and **grandmother**. Timothy did not meet Paul until later teens/early 20s, now mid/late 30s. He is now aligned with his beliefs by what he was taught in his youth. There is a great need for young women to know their Bible, to be a biblical resource for her children. When I become a mother, I do not want to say, “Go ask your father,” because as I experienced in my childhood, the father may not always be there.]

**16 All Scripture** [OT/NT, **Genesis** through **Revelation**, nothing more, nothing less—the canon is closed] **is given by inspiration of God** [This is an example of what we must not only learn, but be convinced of—when Scripture speaks, God speaks. He has, “drawn a straight line with a crooked stick.”], **and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction** [restoration to an upright or right state], **for instruction in righteousness** [integrity, virtue, purity of life, rightness, correctness of thinking feeling and acting], **17 that the man of God may be complete** [completely qualified, sufficient, all parts are complete or whole, so that they might serve their destined purpose], **thoroughly equipped** [**perfect** tense] **for every good work.** [This is from Paul! Talk about an ill-equipped man. He was Saul—a terrorist, persecuting and killing Christians, until the day he met Jesus. We can trust when Paul tells us that God will equip us for our future good works. However, more so, we can trust God telling us that He has equipped us, and He is still equipping us. At least five more books of the NT were written by other men after Paul wrote this; God knew the beginning/end of Scripture and that it would be sufficient. God in His sovereignty orchestrated a sufficient Bible for us from the beginning. Paul did not have this overarching vantage point to know that even more would be added after him. While we can still trust Paul’s words about the, “equipping scripture,” from his testimony, we must remember this is ultimately God assuring us of the, “equipping scripture,” from his sovereign knowledge of the full canon before it was written. I would like to hear Paul’s examples of, “**every good work.**” I think: service opportunities, donating money, spending the night at the Interfaith house, mission trips, etc. Things that are easy or do not cost me too much time, effort, or sacrifice. Paul likely thought of getting rocks thrown at my head for talking about Jesus, being drug around, imprisoned, starved, beaten, robbed, etc.]

## 2 Timothy 4

### Preach the Word (1-5)

Paul gives Timothy nine imperatives in the first eight verses.

**1 I charge you therefore** [far more than a suggestion] **before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: 2 Preach the word!** [What does this say to pastors? Preach the **Scriptures**. What does this say to congregations? Congregate where **Scripture** is preached. **Luther: Because heresies threatened the living apostolic message, it had to be recorded in a book to protect it from falsification. Preaching reverses this process of conservation again, allowing the Scriptures of the past to become the tidings of the present . . . The Gospel has been committed to lifeless paper; fresh words can transform it into glad tidings again.**] **Be ready** [stand by, be at hand, pressing, earnest] **in season and out of season** [MacArthur: The faithful preacher must proclaim the Word when it is popular and/or convenient, and when it is not; when it seems suitable to do so, and when it seems not. The dictates of popular culture, tradition, reputation, acceptance, or esteem in the community (or in the church) must **never** alter the true preacher's commitment to proclaim God's Word.]. **Convince, rebuke** [We are sinners and we will need to be corrected! Driscoll: Biblical preaching first **offends** you, then calls you to repentance, then **restores** you. We need to be offended! We need to be exposed, at times. Sometimes to remove sickness and disease, you have to be cut. Ex: patients' s/p tumor removal. "There was something in you that was not supposed to be there." Lap versus open removal. **Hebrews 4:12** the Bible penetrates, pierces, cuts! **1 Timothy 3:16** says the Scripture is profitable for reproof and correction—if a pastor is preaching God's word, then his message will bring reproof and correction! This is the dirty part of preaching—exposing sin. In addition, the pastors will give an account for it (**2 Timothy 4:1**)], **exhort** [encouragement], **with all longsuffering and teaching. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound** [free from any mixture of error] **doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching** [desirous of hearing something pleasant; itching ears want to be soothed!] **ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.**



Biblical: Truth is **fixed**, culture changes

Postmodernism: Truth **changes** as culture changes

**MacArthur's The Truth War: Uncertainty is the new truth . . . [truth itself is] . . . not fixed . . . [but is] . . . infinitely pliable . . . [and] . . . thus capable of making room for everyone's views.**

**5 But you be watchful** [sober, calm, collected in spirit, temperate; a good leader is the one who stays calm (no one wants the "over-reactor" in a crisis)] **in all things, endure afflictions** [do not seek the short cut, the quick fix—sometimes we have to weather the storm, walk through the valley, etc. — we cannot

always go around], **do the work of an evangelist** [share the love of Christ with others], **fulfill your ministry** [by fulfilling to the utmost all its duties; Paul: keep this going and take the baton].

### Paul's Valedictory (6-8)

**6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering** [figuratively, one whose blood is poured out in a violent death for the cause of God; to offer up one's strength and life; Paul was beheaded shortly after writing this letter], **and the time of my departure** [an unloosening, as of things woven] **is at hand. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing** [Paul's perspective remains not on his death, but on **Christ**. **Philippians 1:21: For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.** The closer he is to death, the closer he is to seeing Christ face to face—His Prize and His Portion.].

Note that Paul has not asked for provisions (clothing, food, blankets, etc.) to ease his suffering, to be broken out, for a guard or judge to be paid off, etc. His time is being spent by preparing Timothy to carry on where he is leaving off. Weeks after this letter was written, Paul was beheaded, and was welcomed into Heaven hearing the words, "well done, good and faithful servant."

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. Is your **manner of life** worthy of being imitated? (Saul did not have a perfect track record either)
2. Are you **convinced** of the things written in God's Word?
3. Could you be swayed by a gospel that is **contrary** to what is laid out in Scripture (this is happening now)? It requires biblical knowledge and leading from the Holy Spirit to discern Truth from untruth.

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Remain **faithful** to other believers (as Paul was to Timothy and as Timothy was to Paul)
2. Remain **faithful** to God's Word (we have to know if it if we are to defend it)
3. Remain **faithful** to the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Recommendation: John MacArthur's *The Truth War*



## Letters to the Early Church Leaders: The Coming of the Lord

---

### Preview: Ready, set, gone!

The Olympics began yesterday and athletes from all over the world converged on London to celebrate sports. For each event, there is a set start time, a specific set of rules, and a clear end. Much like the Olympic events, our lives have a specific start time, a specific set of rules, and a clear end. Rewards will be distributed at the end.

Today's lesson is about the end of the Christian life on Earth—the coming of the Lord.

Key thought: Be **ready**

### Read & Explain (What does it mean?): 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11 (Author = Paul)

#### The Comfort of Christ's Coming

**13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren** [Coffman: This was one of Paul's favorite ways of introducing a new and important subject. It is also found in Romans 1:13; Romans 11:25; 1 Corinthians 10:1; 1 Corinthians 12:1, and 2 Corinthians 1:8.], **concerning those who have fallen asleep** [literally, **sleep**; metaphorically, **dead**], **lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.** **14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring [lead] with Him those who sleep in Jesus.** [Moffat: Since Paul left, some of the Thessalonian Christians had died, and the survivors were distressed with the fear that these would have to occupy a position secondary to those who lived until the Advent of the Lord. Jamieson, Fausset, Brown: It appears our *hope rests on our faith*.]

Asleep or dead? To find out the answer, let us do a Greek word study on the Greek word used here: *koimao* (not an English word study—that is studying backward)

#### Obviously sleep

Matthew 27:52  
Matthew 28:13  
Luke 22:45  
John 11:12  
Acts 12:6

#### Obviously dead

John 11:11  
Acts 7:60  
Acts 13:36  
1 Corinthians 7:39

#### Probably dead

1 Corinthians 11:30  
1 Corinthians 15:6  
1 Corinthians 15:18  
1 Corinthians 15:20  
1 Corinthians 15:21  
1 Thessalonians 4:13  
1 Thessalonians 4:14  
1 Thessalonians 4:15  
2 Peter 3:4

Leon Morris (quoted in Coffman): The very word "cemetery," "[Greek: *koimeterion*], is derived from the word used here, [Greek: *koimao*], and means 'a place of **sleep**.'"

Guzik: Sadly, the Bible never describes the death of the unbeliever as *sleep*, for there is no rest, peace or comfort for them in death. . . . When a sinner dies, we mourn for them. When a believer dies we only mourn for ourselves, because they are with the Lord!

**15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and remain*** [this appears to contrast with **1 Thessalonians 4:13** and **4:14**, implying the opposite of those verses is being alive] **until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep** [Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures: Hence there was no ground for uneasiness about the dead in Christ]. **16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout** [an order, command, specifically a stimulating cry, either that by which animals are roused and urged on by man, as horses by charioteers, hounds by hunters, etc., or that by which a signal is given to men, e.g. to rowers by the master of a ship, to soldiers by a commander (with a loud summons, a trumpet call)], **with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God** [Jamieson, Fausset, Brown: the trumpet blast which usually accompanies God's manifestation in glory (Exodus 19:16; Psalm 47:5); an angel in heaven is licking his **lips**]. **And the dead** [Greek, *nekros*] **in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive *and remain* shall be caught up together** [Guzik: In the ancient Greek, the phrase to meet was used as a technical term to describe the official welcoming of honored guests. This passage is the basis for the New Testament doctrine of the *rapture*, the catching away of believers to be with Jesus. The word *rapture* is not in the ancient Greek text, but comes from the Latin **Vulgate**, which translates the phrase caught up with *rapturus*, from which we get our English word *rapture*. Paul's statement, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is both dramatic and fantastic. He speaks of Christians flying upward, caught up . . . in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. We wouldn't believe this unless the Bible told us it were so, not any more than we would believe that God who became a baby, that He did miracles, that He died on a cross and He lives in us.] **with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always** [at all times, always, ever] **be with the Lord** [Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures: This rapture of the saints (both risen and changed) is a glorious climax to Paul's argument of consolation. David Guzik: This is the great reward of heaven—to be with **Jesus**. Death can't break our unity with Jesus or with other Christians.]. **18 Therefore comfort** [Greek, *parakaleo*, **exhort**] **one another with these words.**

Adam Clarke: Strange saying! comfort a man with the information that he is going to appear before the judgment-seat of God! Who can feel comfort from these words? That man alone with whose spirit the Spirit of God bears witness that his sins are blotted out, and the thoughts of whose heart are purified by the inspiration of Gods Holy Spirit, so that he can perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his name. Reader, thou art not in a safe state unless it be thus with thee, or thou art hungering and thirsting after righteousness.

### The Day of the Lord

**1 But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. 2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night** [Lipscomb: Only by a righteous and pure life can one be ready for his coming]. **3 For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden** [unexpected, sudden, unforeseen] **destruction** [ruin, destroy, death] **comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman** [Julie Fleming: You know they are coming, but you are not prepared for the amount of pain until you have experienced it]. **And they shall not escape** [flee away to safety; Agent Smith in *The Matrix*: You hear that Mr. Anderson? That is the sound of inevitability. It is the sound of your death. Liam Neeson in *Taken*: I don't know who you are. I don't know what you want. If you are looking for ransom, I can tell you I don't have money. But what I do

have are a very particular set of skills; skills I have acquired over a very long career. Skills that make me a nightmare for people like you. If you let my daughter go now, that'll be the end of it. I will not look for you, I will not pursue you. But if you don't, I will look for you, I will find you, and I will kill you. Marko [bad guy]: **Good luck.** 4 **But you, brethren, are not in darkness** [literally, darkness; metaphorically, ignorance, on the **devil's** side], **so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.** 5 **You are all sons of light** [literally, light; metaphorically, knowledge, on **God's** side] **and sons of the day** [David Guzik: Paul simply tells Christians that they should *be* who they *are*. God has made us sons of the light and sons of the day.]. **We are not of the night nor of darkness.** 6 **Therefore let us not sleep** [a different Greek word for sleep], **as others do, but let us watch and be sober.** 7 **For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.** 8 **But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love** [*agape*], **and as a helmet the hope of salvation** [Jamieson, Fausset, Brown: The *helmet* and *breastplate* defend the two vital parts, the head and the heart respectively. . . . The head needs to be kept from error, the heart from sin. Edmunds: With head and heart right, the whole man is right. Adam Clarke: We are not only called to WORK, but we are called also to *fight*; and that we may not be surprised, we must *watch*; and that we may be in a condition to defend ourselves, we must be sober; and that we may be enabled to conquer, we must be *armed*: and what the *breastplate* and *helmet* are to a *soldier's heart and head*, such are *faith, love, and hope* to us. *Faith* enables us to *endure*, as seeing him who is invisible; *love* excites us to *diligence* and *activity*, and makes us bear our troubles and difficulties pleasantly; *hope* helps us to *anticipate* the great *end*, the glory that shall be revealed, and which we know we shall in due time obtain, if we faint not.]. 9 **For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.** [David Guzik: His death was *death*, so ours would only be sleep. Jim's translation: Jesus is coming back for me and it will be good for me **forever**]

11 **Therefore comfort** [Greek, *parakaleo*, exhort] **each other and edify** [build up] **one another, just as you also are doing.** [Adam Clarke: Rest assured that, in **all** times and circumstances, it shall be well with the righteous; let every man lay this to heart; and with this consideration *comfort* and *edify each other* in all trials and difficulties.]

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. Jesus is coming back
2. We will experience **death** (either our own deaths or the deaths of those around us)
3. Death can be a **good** thing (to bring the reality of our temporality to light to unbelievers)

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Be ready
2. Comfort and edify
3. Help **others** to be ready

# The Essential 100

---

## A Bible overview plan for 2011-2012

The Essential 100 (E100) is a systematic approach that guides readers through the big picture of the Bible. It is a carefully selected list of short Bible passages—50 from the Old Testament and 50 from the New Testament. Each testament is broken up into ten, five-week series. We will move from Old to New Testaments every five weeks. My goal is to teach three of the five lessons in every series.

The E100 in Sunday school: We will REAP (read, explain, apply, and personalize) one passage each week and finish a series every five weeks. Each lesson will include a key verse for memorization. At the end of two years, we will have covered the essential 100 passages in the Bible.

Additional information: To learn more about The E100 program and to obtain additional resources, visit [e100challenge.com](http://e100challenge.com). Our Sunday school website is [stuartheights.org/sundayschool](http://stuartheights.org/sundayschool).

## The Schedule: The Apostles' Teaching

This is our ninth five-week series in the New Testament. So far, we have looked at The Early Years of Jesus, The Teachings of Jesus, the Miracles of Jesus, The Final Days of Jesus, The Church is Born, The Travels of Paul, Letters to the Early Church, and Letters to the Early Church Leaders.

Date	Lesson	Key Verse(s)	Passage	Speaker
September 9	The Most Excellent Way	1 Cor. 13:13	1 Cor. 13	Jim Fleming
September 16	A New Creation	2 Cor. 5:17	2 Cor. 4:1-6:2	Jim Fleming
September 23	A Living Hope	1 Peter 1:3	1 Peter 1:1-2:12	Amy Valovcin
September 30	Faith and Works	James 2:17	James 1-2	David Barber
October 7	Love One Another	1 John 4:7	1 John 3:11-4:21	Jim Fleming

# The Apostles' Teaching: The Most Excellent Way

---

## Preview: The Christian Ideal

The passages that we will study in this five-week series are some of the most famous in all of the New Testament. Today's text, in particular, was probably read at more than half of our weddings. **John William McGarvey said: It has been admired by all ages, but, unfortunately, practiced by none!**

**1 Corinthians 13** is simple, straightforward, beautiful, and impossible—for everyone but Jesus. First, we will look at the text, then we will look at how Jesus fleshed it out and how that changed everything.

Key thought: Jesus' life shows us the most excellent way: **love**

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): 1 Corinthians 13 (Author = Paul)

### The Greatest Gift

**1** Though I speak with the tongues [languages] of men and of angels, but have not love [**agape**], I have become sounding [roaring] brass or a clanging [repeated often, wailing, lamenting ringing, clanging] cymbal [Josiah Gregory: People of *little religion* are always *noisy*; he who has not the love of God and man filling his heart is like an *empty wagon* coming *violently* down a *hill*: it makes a *great noise*, because there is *nothing in it*.; Coffman: The cacophonous pretense of heathen worship included the clashing and banging of gongs and cymbals and the braying of brass trumpets. Barclay identified such noises as characteristic “especially of the worship of Dionysus and Cybele.”]. **2** And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries [mysteries, secrets] and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love [*agape*; Guzik: According to Alan Redpath, we get our English word *agony* from *agape*. “It means the actual absorption of our being in one great passion.” (Redpath) Strictly speaking, *agape* can’t be defined as “God’s love,” because men are said to *agape* sin and the world (John 3:19, 1 John 2:15). But it can be defined as a sacrificial, giving, absorbing, love. The word has little to do with emotion; it has much to do with self-denial for the sake of another.], I am nothing. **3** And though I bestow [give] all my goods [possessions, goods, wealth, property] to feed the poor [the word used describes giving slowly to impact as many lives as possible], and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love [*agape*], it profits [assists, is useful to, is advantageous to] me nothing. [Jamieson, Fausset, Brown: Without “love” prophecy, knowledge, and faith, are not what they seem; Examples: plastic fruit, chocolate Easter bunnies]

**4** [Two things love is like] Love [*agape*] suffers long [to be of a long spirit, not to lose heart, to persevere patiently and bravely in enduring misfortunes and troubles, to be patient in bearing the offenses and injuries of others, to be mild and slow in avenging, to be longsuffering, slow to anger, slow to punish] and is kind [mild, kind; like mild salsa—virtually anyone can tolerate it] [Guzik: Paul is not writing about how love feels, he is writing about how it can be seen in action. True love is always demonstrated by **action**.]; [Eight things that love is not like] love [*agape*] does not envy [to burn with zeal, to be heated or to boil with envy, hatred, anger]; love [*agape*] does not parade itself [to boast one’s self, a self display, employing rhetorical embellishments in extolling one’s self excessively], is not puffed up [proud, puffed up, inflated]; **5** does not behave rudely [to act unbecomingly], does not seek [require, demand, crave] its own [itself], is not provoked [made sharp, sharpened, stimulated, spurred on, urged, irritated, provoked, aroused to anger, scorned, despised, exasperated, burned with anger], thinks [reckons—this word deals with facts, not suppositions] no evil [i.e., it is not dwelling on past wrongs]; **6** does not rejoice [*chairō*, rejoices, be glad, rejoice exceedingly, thrive] in iniquity [injustice, unrighteousness, deeds violating law and justice, act of unrighteousness], but rejoices [to rejoice with, take part in another’s joy, to rejoice together, to congratulate] in the truth; **7** [Four things love is like] bears all things [**decks**, thatches, covers, protects or keeps by covering, preserves, covers over with silence, keeps secret, hides, conceals (the errors and faults of others), by covering to keep off something which threatens, bears up against, holds out against, and so endures; Spurgeon: Love stands in the presence of a fault, with a finger on her lip; Spurgeon: I would, my brothers and sisters, that we could all imitate the pearl oyster. A hurtful particle intrudes itself into its shell, and this vexes and grieves it.

It cannot eject the evil, and what does it do but *cover* it with a precious substance extracted out of its own life, by which it turns the intruder into a pearl. Oh, that we could do so with the provocations we receive from our fellow Christians, so that pearls of patience, gentleness, long-suffering, and forgiveness might be bred within us by that which has harmed us.], **believes all things** [i.e., assumes innocence], **hopes all things, endures** [remains, tarries behind, does not recede or flee, preserves under misfortunes and trials, endures, bears bravely and calmly] **all things** [Jamieson, Fausset, Brown: Without speaking of what it has to bear. . . It *endures without divulging* to the world personal distress. Literally said of *holding fast* like a watertight vessel; so the charitable man *contains himself* in silence from giving vent to what selfishness would prompt under personal hardship.]. [John Darby: Circumstances are but an occasion for [love] to act and shew itself]

**8 Love** [*agape*] **never fails** [falls down, falls off, loses, perishes; Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures: Love survives **everything**]. **But whether there are prophecies, they will fail** [*katargeo*, to render idle, unemployed, inactivate, inoperative, to cause a person or thing to have no further efficiency, to deprive of force, influence, power, to cause to cease, put an end to, do away with, annul, abolish, to cease, to pass away, be done away, to be severed from, separated from, discharged from, loosed from any one, to terminate all intercourse with one]; **whether there are tongues** [languages], **they will cease** [*pauo*, to make to cease or desist, to restrain a thing or person from something, to cease, to leave off, have got release from sin, no longer stirred by its incitements and seductions]; **whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away** [*katargeo*, to render idle, unemployed, inactivate, inoperative, to cause a person or thing to have no further efficiency, to deprive of force, influence, power, to cause to cease, put an end to, do away with, annul, abolish, to cease, to pass away, be done away, to be severed from, separated from, discharged from, loosed from any one, to terminate all intercourse with one]. **9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is perfect** [complete] **has come, then that which is in part will be done away** [*katargeo*, to render idle, unemployed, inactivate, inoperative, to cause a person or thing to have no further efficiency, to deprive of force, influence, power, to cause to cease, put an end to, do away with, annul, abolish, to cease, to pass away, be done away, to be severed from, separated from, discharged from, loosed from any one, to terminate all intercourse with one].

**11 When I was a child** [infant, little child, minor], **I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things** [Guys: What childish things do we need to put away?]. **12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly** [obscurely; Coffman: Ancient mirrors were of polished **metal**, easily tarnished, and any image was only dimly seen; John Wesley: Even when God himself reveals things to me, great part of them is still kept under the veil], **but then face to face** [with God]. **Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known** [i.e., I will understand as He understands me].

**13 And now abide faith, hope, love** [*agape*], **these three; but the greatest** [greater, larger, elder, stronger] **of these is love** [*agape*].



### Excerpts and Adaptations from Rob Bell's sermon, *Love Wins*

Jesus fleshed out **1 Corinthians 13**. He had choices. He was wronged, betrayed, deserted, gossiped about, mocked, and all sorts of things happened to Him. He had choices about how He would respond—whether or not He would respond with evil, spit back, throw a fist back, or pick up a club and fight back.

In every passage, Jesus responds with **love**. Sometimes it is tough love, but He never once returns the evil done to Him. You never hear Him say, “Just give Me time and I will get even.” He responds with love every time.

In addition, a few days after the cross, He rises from the dead. **Hebrews 13:5** says, **For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.** Jesus says this in **John 16:33**: **These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.**

Jesus is saying, ‘**I won.**’ No one had ever lived the perfect life and no one had ever been able to restrain and hold back from doing at least one act of evil, but Jesus loved the whole way through life—He did it.

Everything since the cross functions differently. When somebody says, “So-and-so got me. I will wait, and I will get revenge. I will get even with them.” They are demonstrating that they are living according to the way things worked pre-cross. Things work a different way now because Jesus won.

The New Testament authors understood this. **Romans 12:21** says, **Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.** Paul understood that every day we face these endless choices of how we are going to respond to the world. Will I respond to the world with more **evil** or with **good**?

If you view things the old way, the evil-against-evil way, the pre-cross way, then you will continue to get revenge. I will pull ahead of them, then I will pull into their lane and then I will slow down. Yeah, that will show them—they will just pull over by the side of the road and weep in repentance!

If our spouse brings up something from the past and hurts us and we think, “What could I bring up to get them back? I can do that.” If I view things the old way, then I have to outdo you. I have to hurt you a little more than you hurt me. However, if I live the new way—the post-cross way, then I love like Jesus.

Look at **Colossians 2:15**: **And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.** Now think about whom was the public spectacle on the cross. Jesus, right? Jesus was left naked in public to die. Romans 1, Jesus 0 (appearing to be a public victory for the Romans). **However, if you can kill somebody and that person still lives, then who wins?**

You killed me but I am cooking fish a few days later. The **public spectacle** says, “You can do anything to this Jesus and He still overcomes it.” If you can do the worst public thing to someone and they still live, then it goes from a public defeat to a public victory—Jesus triumphed and won.

Let us put it this way, the powers that put Jesus on the cross, that mock Him, divide up His clothing, spit on Him, slap Him, beat Him on the head with a stick, pierce His sides with spikes—those powers at that moment appear like they are winning. However, in the end they lose because He rises from the dead.



Therefore, the powers that appear that they are winning, lose. In addition, the person who appears naked and bloody, as if He is losing, actually wins.

If this is the case, then the cross is God's way of saying, "Love **wins**." The cross is God's way of saying, "Listen, listen, listen, I know what they did to you, but love wins. I know what they're saying about you and you have these choices, but whatever it is, love wins."

It does not mean that we condone, it does not mean that we brush over sin—it means that love wins.

Therefore, when you are in traffic, love wins. Love wins—not the double-gun salute. Love wins. No matter what is done to us, love can win. Love wins at the next family reunion. Love wins tomorrow with the person four cubicles over who is a contestant for Most Annoying Employee in the World. Love wins. Love wins and we have choices about how we are going to respond because love is a choice.

Now, let us connect **1 Corinthians 13:8a: Love never fails**. Love is incapable of failing (it cannot fail).

I know what you are thinking, "You do not understand my brother-in-law." Yeah, I do. Love still wins. "But you do not understand my spouse." Yeah, I do. Love still wins. "But you do not understand my neighbor. My neighbor's of a different orientation." Love still wins. "But you do not understand my sixteen year old kid." OK, I do not. You are right. I do not. However, love still wins.

Now, I do not know about you, but I need many reminders of this. I need this at home, at work, and on the bumper of the car ahead of me. I need it on the forehead of every person I meet. This would help me; because I need to be regularly reminded—otherwise I fall into patterns that are not love winning.

You are gonna get slapped, and you are gonna get beaten, and you are gonna get mocked, and you are gonna get spit on, and you are gonna be betrayed, and you are gonna have friends who put the knife in your back, and you are gonna get criticized, and you are gonna have people who keep falling asleep on you—people you really love are not gonna be there for you at key times and it is in those moments when you need to be reminded that love wins. I say we need to speak this to each other—we need to speak it a lot. We need to call our friends and just say, "Hey, love wins." Email a friend and say, "Love wins."

The cross is God's way of saying to us, in all of our brokenness, in all of our tendencies to respond in all of these different ways, "Jesus went through everything and more, and responded in love—it has been done. Somebody did it, He actually responded in love the whole way through. And He did it and I have sent the Spirit to live inside of you and you can do it too."

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. Love wins
2. Jesus is the love in **1 Corinthians 13**

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Live like love wins
2. Tell people about Jesus' love

# The Apostles' Teaching: A New Creation

---

## Preview: Changes

Last week we looked at one of the central tenets of New Testament theology: that Jesus' resurrection changes everything because love won on the cross and over death. This week, we look at how that resurrection changes us, how God wants to reconcile us to Himself, and how He wants us to live out that resurrection. The victory and the change did not stop at Jesus' resurrection—we participate in that too.

Key thought: **Erwin McManus: You cannot meet the Creator of the universe and remain the same**

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): 2 Corinthians 4:1-6:2 (Author = Paul)

### 2 Corinthians 4

#### The Light of Christ's Gospel

**1 Therefore [1 Corinthians 3** talked about how the veil that separated the Old Testament saints from God was removed with Jesus and now we have better access to God], **since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart** [to be utterly spiritless, to be wearied out, exhausted; **True Grit: Mattie: "We must stop. Little Blackie is played out." Horrible noises are indeed coming from the horse, but Rooster is grim. Rooster Cogburn: "We have miles yet."**]. **2 But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully** [with intention to ensnare or corrupt], **but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God** [preach and teach it straight]. **3 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. 5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants** [slaves] **for Jesus' sake** [Jesus was the **hero** of their message]. **6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ** [i.e., God is still in the **lighting** business—He came up with the entire concept and knew 4,000 years before Paul wrote this that the creation of light would serve as a perfect example of the Holy Spirit's working in the lives of believers. Never think that God is playing checkers—His planning makes chess grandmasters look like children.].

#### Cast Down but Unconquered

**7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence** [Greek, *hyperbole*; a throwing beyond, superiority, excellence, pre-eminence, beyond measure, exceedingly, preeminently, beyond all **measure**] **of the power may be of God and not of us** [we are limited to show His limitlessness—we are the earthly example of His heavenly excellence]. **8 We are hard-pressed** [used for grapes] **on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair** [utterly at loss, utterly destitute of measures or resources, renouncing all hope]; **9 persecuted** [put to flight, followed], **but not forsaken** [totally abandoned, utterly forsaken]; **struck down, but not destroyed— 10 always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body** [the resurrection]

of Jesus allows our center to be strong and allows us to withstand tremendous external pressure without being crushed—the only way an object withstands external pressure is if the inside is stronger than the outside]. **11 For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh** [we are **limited** to show His limitlessness—we are the earthly example of His life]. **12 So then death is working in us, but life in you.**

**13 And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak, 14 knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you** [we will receive what Jesus received—resurrection]. **15 For all things are for your sakes** [a condensed **Romans 8:28**], **that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.**

### Seeing the Invisible

**16 Therefore** [because of the resurrection of Jesus and our future resurrection] **we do not lose heart** [same word used in **1 Corinthians 4:1**: to be utterly spiritless, to be wearied out, exhausted]. **Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day** [because the center is strong we can be renewed]. **17 For our light affliction** [in context: these Christians were being hunted down and killed—something we can hardly relate to], **which is but for a moment** [because our lives are described as a vapor], **is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.**

## 2 Corinthians 5

### Assurance of the Resurrection

**1 For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens** [Paul uses the house/tent as a metaphor for eternal life. Theological accuracy does not require undue complexity.]. **2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven** [i.e., we want eternal life now], **3 if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. 4 For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. 5 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee** [the Holy Spirit is the **down** payment God has paid—securing our delivery].

**6 So we are always confident** [courageous, confident, bold], **knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. 7 For we walk by faith, not by sight** [If we allow ourselves to be distracted by all of the things that are here, we will not be focused on the things that are there. Example: mowing in a straight line.]. **8 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.**

### The Judgment Seat of Christ

**9 Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. 11 Knowing, therefore, the terror** [fear,

terror, the Greek is *phobos*] **of the Lord, we persuade men** [a fear of God that judgment for all men is coming one day]; **but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.**

### Be Reconciled to God

**12 For we do not commend ourselves again to you, but give you opportunity to boast on our behalf, that you may have an answer for those who boast in appearance** [what they see] **and not in heart** [what they cannot see]. **13 For if we are beside ourselves** [literally, thrown out of **position** or displaced; metaphorically, crazy], **it is for God; or if we are of sound mind** [sane], **it is for you.** **14 For the love of Christ compels** [to hold together with constraint—example: **cattle**] **us, because we judge thus: that if One** [Jesus] **died for all, then all died; 15 and He** [Jesus] **died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again** [Jesus' death requires our lives to have a different purpose. **John Calvin: He died for us that we might die to ourselves.**].

**16 Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ** [anyone can be a Christian—we must stop looking at people as, 'good potential converts,' and start seeing everyone as, 'good potential converts,'—for goodness' sake, the man writing this text was a murderer!], **he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 18 Now all things are of God, who has reconciled** [Greek, *katallasso*; to change, exchange, as coins for others of equivalent value] **us to Himself through Jesus Christ** [In any reconciliation, the goal is that all parties agree or match on what the truth is. In the reconciliation of man to God, God is truth and man must match or agree on that truth. **David Guzik: We are the party in the wrong.** Jesus Christ's perfect life, death, burial, and resurrection is the vehicle by which that reconciliation occurs.], **and has given us the ministry of reconciliation** [The word used is the same word used for the moneychangers that Jesus threw out of the temple. How glorious a God that allows us to participate in His ministries with Him. God is not the boss who gives you a job to do and gives you no authority to do it—God **empowers** us to reconcile in the world—because that is what He does. Reconciliation is taking everything bad that we have ever done and exchanging it for the hyperbolic wonderfulness of Jesus Christ.], **19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing** [counting] **their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word** [speech] **of reconciliation.**

**20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ** [and as we saw last week in Lybia—being an ambassador is not always safe], **as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God** [this clearly implies to me that we have a role to play in our reconciliation to God—it is not a 100% act of God—there is work for us to do in this space]. **21 For He** [God the Father] **made Him** [God the Son—Jesus Christ] **who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him** [Through Jesus' work, we are the righteousness of God—that is a miracle. **Kruse: We obviously stand at the brink of a great mystery and our understanding of it can only be minimal. Poole: As Christ was not made sin by any sin inherent in him, so neither are we made righteous by any righteousness inherent in us, but by the righteousness of Christ imputed to us.**].

## 2 Corinthians 6

### Marks of the Ministry

**1 We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain** [in an empty way that devalues or lowers its meaning]. **2 For He says:**

**"In an acceptable time I have heard you,  
And in the day of salvation I have helped you."**

**Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.**

### Excerpts and Adaptations from Erwin McManus' book, *The Barbarian Way*

Jesus Christ wants to take us to places where only dead men and women can go.

John the Baptist did not fit into the organized religion of his time because **God** did not fit either

What do you fear when you have already died and have **walked** away?

Challenge: You cannot meet the Creator of the universe and remain the **same**

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. The resurrection changed **everything**
2. God desires reconciliation
3. Meeting God changes everything

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Live out the resurrection in your flesh every day—be an example of it
2. Reconcile
3. Regularly examine whether or not you have evidence of **change**

# The Apostles' Teaching: A Living Hope

---

Key thought: Jesus is the living Hope that conquers all

**Read & Explain (What does it mean?): 1 Peter 1:1-2:12 (Author = Peter)**

## 1 Peter 1

### Greeting to the Elect Pilgrims

**1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,**

**To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:**

**Grace to you and peace be multiplied.**

Peter is writing to early Christians. However, it is because of their faith that Peter is reaching out, “**Grace to you and peace be multiplied.**” God’s grace is **freely given** to us. It is unearned and undeserved. God’s grace covers us all, and Peter uses this in his greeting to remind the church that God’s grace and peace are with them always.

### A Heavenly Inheritance

**3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.**

Peter mentions an inheritance—one that is, “**incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away.**” Our inheritance as Christians is different than most. It will never get old, never wear out, and nothing can destroy it. Our inheritance will never spoil, never go bad; not even **sin** affects it. It will never lose its worth. It is perfect, picked out and made just for us by our Creator and stored for us in heaven. What did we do to earn it? Nothing. What can we do to lose it? Nothing. It is ours as true believers in our Savior.

Such powerful words. The power that Peter wants to equip the readers of this letter (both then and now) is the power of a living hope. If we are going to love as Jesus loved, we need this hope shining through our lives, even in the tough and trying times. **In trails, is our hope in Jesus or do we rely on man?**

Hope—we can hope for so many things. However, this hope is very different from our normal use of the word. This is how Webster’s Dictionary defines hope: (verb) to cherish a desire with **anticipation**. This is how I define Hope: Jesus.

Peter talks about a living hope. With the opposite being of course a **dead** hope. **James 2:26b** says, "**Faith without works is dead.**" Faith without works is a faith that is unproductive and fruitless. A living hope in our lives should produce results. There should be evidence that we have a living hope.

**"My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus name."** Edward More (1934)

**6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.**

Amy's story

**10 Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, 11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. 12 To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.**

The people that Peter is writing to never saw Christ and never witnessed with their eyes the miracles that He performed—yet they loved Him. They rejoice, with what Peter says is, "joy inexpressible and full of glory." Peter also mentions the angels, they are eager to see Jesus' plan revealed. Not even they know the things that God has planned and they desire to watch us rejoice and glorify God.

### Living Before God Our Father

**13 Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 14 as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; 15 but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."**

In these times, both men and women wore long, dress-like garments. To gird up the loins meant being able to move quickly, so they would tuck the ends of their garment into their belts. This would free up their legs and feet from tripping over the ends of what they were wearing. Here, Peter is saying to free your mind of anything that could trip you up. Let go of the doubt and cling to your hope in Christ. **John Piper once preached, "When Jesus comes back, He is bringing grace to the people of God. Grace is on the way. Hope in it. Hope in it fully! Hope fully in God's grace."**

This is the message that Peter is trying to convey to the early Christians: trials will come, persecution will happen, darkness will fall, but Jesus Christ conquers all. Therefore, the command here, to hope fully, is be fully **confident** that Jesus Christ is coming again.



Children are perfect imitators. The problem is that they usually imitate the things that we would rather them forget. **"Be holy, for I am holy,"** applies to all aspects of our lives, not just the ones that fit our time frame or schedule.

**Rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you.** To me, this means putting all our hope in Him who gives us grace. I do, however, struggle with part of this verse. Perhaps, it is why I am drawn to it. Rest fully, rest! Not stand anxiously, wait impatiently, act nervously, but rest! Rest in Jesus! Rest in his hope. How amazing is our God that He wants us to find our hope in Him, and then rest.

I struggle with resting. Resting in our Hope, implies that I must be still. Admittedly, I am a planner, a list maker. However, God is calling me to find my rest in Him. Find my Hope in Him. Peter puts it very bluntly in these verses. Although things are tough, we still are commanded to love with the Love of Christ.

**17 And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; 18 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. 20 He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you 21 who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.**

The Lord will judge us all the same—no one gets special treatment. He will look at our hearts. There is one thing that separates us from the rest of the world: our faith. Peter is saying that earthly things with fade away. We are not saved by things that fade. Everything we have, no matter how special it is to us now, it will fade. We were saved by the blood of Jesus, the perfect spotless lamb. Jesus died to save us from our sins, so our lives need to reflect Jesus.

### The Enduring Word

**22 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, 23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,** [The price that was paid for our sin was high. Jesus paid it with His life, He was perfect, and He died to save us. Peter's repetitiveness for Godly living is understandable. If Jesus died to save us, we should live our lives in gratitude for Him. The amazing thing about our Savior is that He knew we were sinners, He knew we were not perfect but He died for us anyway. As Christians, we must live out truth every day. We are to love one another with a pure heart. **David Guzik said, "Holy living is incomplete if it isn't accompanied by love."** Live a holy life, live a life of love, live a life that is worthy of the one that died to save you. Everything from this world will fade away. The word of the Lord will last forever.] **24 because**

**"All flesh is as grass,  
And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass.  
The grass withers,  
And its flower falls away,  
25 But the word of the LORD endures forever."**

Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.

## 1 Peter 2

**2** Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, **2** as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, **3** if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

Just as a baby craves milk, we should crave the word of God. We, as Christians should desire to know more about God. “**Tasted that the Lord is gracious.**” Tasted means you have **tried** it before. We should spend so much time in the word that we crave it. The word of the Lord helps us grow, we as Christians need to spend time in the word to help us grow in our walk with the Lord. We need to lay down all things that would separate us or keep us from growing in the Lord. We need to live a life that is worthy of the one that died for us.

### The Chosen Stone and His Chosen People

**4** Coming to Him *as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious*, **5** you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. **6** Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture,

“Behold, I lay in Zion

A chief cornerstone, elect, precious,

And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.”

**7** Therefore, to you who believe, *He is precious; but to those who are disobedient,*

“The stone which the builders rejected

Has become the chief cornerstone,”

**8** and

“A stone of stumbling

And a rock of offense.”

We are living stones being shaped and formed into a place for Lord to dwell. There is no doubt who the chief corner stone is: Jesus. He was rejected by men, but is used as our foundation.

**They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.**

**9** But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; **10** who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

### Living Before the World

**11 Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, 12 having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.**

Peter calls us some amazing things in these verses. God has called us to be His people. We are special because we belong to God. We are His and He uses us for His **glory**. He called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

“They will know we’re Christians by our love.” That is what Peter is telling us. We are to conduct ourselves with honor, even when others speak evil against us. The Father knows that we cannot do anything on our own. He calls us to trust Him, and lean on Him for the ability to love as Jesus loved and live as Jesus lived. He can help us do things we never thought possible.

Peter is telling us to do the following: Hope fully in Jesus. Rest in that He loves us all. Love others with the Love of Christ. As humans, we all desire hope, love, and rest. We can find all three in our savior. How wonderful is that?

Challenge: **Are you willing to step out and be an example for the Lord?** (There may be several things that stand in our way but we must be the example. We must put our faith solely in Him)

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. Jesus = Hope (Without Him we having nothing) Hope in everything but Jesus will fail. Placing our hope fully in the hands of our Savior will lead us through the trails.

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Admit your struggles (this is hard to do—sometimes it takes a Sunday school lesson staring you in the face to admit your struggles)
2. **Build** your hope on Jesus (because everything else will fade). To quote more of the song I stated earlier, **“On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand.”** Hope built on Jesus is firm and will stand strong. Jesus is strong even when were not.
3. Find your rest in Him (because in Him we find peace and comfort—what a perfect place to find rest)

# The Apostles' Teaching: Faith and Works

---

## Preview: Trials, Temptations, and Applying the Word

Key thought: Trials are God's developing solution for working out our salvation

## Overview of James (The Proverbs of the New Testament)

### Author

- In [James 1:1](#), he identifies himself as James
- There are four James' named in Scripture
- Probably the brother of Jesus and leader of the Jerusalem council ([Acts 15](#))
- Could not have been the apostle James, who died too early (AD 44)
- The other two men named James had neither the stature nor the influence

### Who was James?

- He was one of the select individuals **Christ appeared to** after his resurrection ([1 Corinthians 15:7](#))
- Paul called him a "**pillar**" of the church ([Galatians 2:9](#))
- **Paul saw James**, on his first post-conversion visit to Jerusalem ([Galatians 1:19](#))
- **Paul saw him again** on his last visit ([Acts 21:18](#))
- When Peter was rescued from prison, he told his friends to **tell James** ([Acts 12:17](#))
- A leader in the **council of Jerusalem** ([Acts 15:13](#))
- Jude identified himself simply as "**a brother of James**" ([Jude 1:1](#))
- No one was more qualified to talk to the Jews than James
- He was **martyred** c. AD 62

### Audience

- Jewish
  - The recipients are identified explicitly Jewish in [James 1:1](#): "**the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad**"
  - A Jewish audience would be more in keeping with the obviously Jewish nature of the letter (e.g., the use of the Hebrew title for God, *kyrios sabaoth*, "Lord Almighty," in [James 5:4](#))
- Christians ([James 2:1](#); [5:7-8](#))
- Scattered. I believe that these were believers from the early Jerusalem church who, after Stephen's death, were scattered as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Syrian Antioch (see [Acts 8:1](#); [11:19](#) and notes). This would account for James' references to trials and oppression, his intimate knowledge of the readers and the authoritative nature of the letter. As leader of the Jerusalem church, James wrote as pastor to instruct and encourage his dispersed people in the face of their difficulties.

### About the Book of James

- Jewish nature
- Emphasis on vital Christianity, characterized by good deeds and a faith that works

- Simple organization
- Familiarity with Jesus' teachings preserved in the Sermon on the Mount

James	Matthew
2:5	5:3
3:10-12	7:15-20
3:18	5:9
5:2-3	6:19-20
5:12	5:33-37

- Similarity: OT wisdom writings (**Proverbs**)
- Its excellent Greek

### Framework of James

The book of James outlines the faith walk:

- **James 1:1-27** Genuine religion
- **James 2:1-3:12** Genuine faith
- **James 3:13-5:20** Genuine wisdom

### Outline of James 1-2

- **James 1:1** Introduction
- **James 1:2-18** Trials and Temptations
- **James 1:19-27** Listening and Doing
- **James 2:1-13** Favoritism Forbidden
- **James 2:14-26** Faith and Deeds

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): James 1-2 (Author = James)

### James 1

#### Greeting to the Twelve Tribes

**1 James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,**

**To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad:**

**Greetings.**

#### Profiting from Trials

**2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without**

reproach, and it will be given to him [this is wisdom about the trials]. **6** But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. **7** For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; **8** *he is* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

### The Perspective of Rich and Poor

**9** Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, **10** but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away. **11** For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits.

### Loving God Under Trials

**12** Blessed *is* the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. **13** Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. **14** But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. **15** Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

**16** Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. **17** Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. **18** Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

### Qualities Needed in Trials

**19** So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; **20** for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

### Doers—Not Hearers Only

**21** Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

**22** But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. **23** For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; **24** for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. **25** But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it*, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

**26** If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion *is* useless. **27** Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world [do for others that cannot and keep yourself clean].

## James 2

Examples of James 1

### Beware of Personal Favoritism

**1** My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with partiality. **2** For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, **3** and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool," **4** have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?

**5** Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world *to be* rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? **6** But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? **7** Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?

**8** If you really fulfill *the* royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well; **9** but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. **10** For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is guilty of all. **11** For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. **12** So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. **13** For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

#### 1. Favoritism: REAL DEAL

- Looking beyond the person
- Do not judge, show mercy instead

### Faith Without Works Is Dead

**14** What *does it* profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? **15** If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, **16** and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what *does it* profit? **17** Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

**18** But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. **19** You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! **20** But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? **21** Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? **22** Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? **23** And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. **24** You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

**25** Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent *them* out another way?



**26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.**

2. Works of Faith: 2:14 What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?

- Abraham: Connection with audience
- Rahab: A harlot has it and you do not?

**Homework:**

Think through your trials in life

- It is what God has used; who you are
- They were not mistakes; purposeful

Apply my trials

- In light of my trials, whom can I help?
- Am I thinking too much about it?
- Am I doing too much for me?

**Apply (What is the point?)**

1. Stay focused
2. Trials are God's developing solution
3. Work out your salvation

**Personalize (What do I do with that?)**

1. Ask: What is my real deal?
2. Ask: Who can I help?
3. Just do it!

# The Apostles' Teaching: Love One Another

---

## Review

This is the last Sunday school lesson in the epistles for the Essential 100 series. We started this five-week series on the Apostles' teaching talking about love in **1 Corinthians 13** and we end it talking about love in **1 John 3-4**. We are commanded to, 'love one another,' 13 times in Scripture—by Jesus, Paul, Peter, and lastly by John.

## Preview: A life bookended by love

**1 John** was written by John the disciple (one of the 12 apostles). One of the themes of the **Gospel of John** is that Jesus loved John. John referred to himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved and that same theme shows up in this letter that he writes toward the end of his life. Love **bookends** John's life—and that grows and matures over time.

John writes this letter, most likely from Ephesus, around the time that he wrote **Revelation** (which we will finish our Essential 100 study with a few weeks from now). John is an extremely old man (perhaps even 80 years old—and in an age when the average age was 25-30, that was old) and speaks to his audience as, "**little children**" (**1 John 2:1**).

Key thought: The Christian life is about knowing, experiencing, sharing, and showing **love**

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): 1 John 3:11-4:21 (Author = John)

### 1 John 3

#### The Imperative of Love

**11 For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another** [here is the command to love], **12 not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother** [the contrast—much like **1 Corinthians 13**, love is sometimes best defined by what it is not]. **And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous.**

**13 Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you. 14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren** [the **proof** of our conversion is our love for other believers]. **He who does not love his brother abides in death. 15 Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him** [we do not get to hate—it is simply not allowed].

#### The Outworking of Love

**16 By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17 But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?** [Example: when we give our lives to Christ, He wants all of us. He wants our hands open to be freely giving. He wants our pocketbooks and our wallets to use for His purposes. He wants our eyes open to see the need all around us. Lastly, he wants us to follow through and actually do the work. Thinking and wishing are not the same as doing.]

**18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth** [Test #1: Am I **working**? Have you heard the phrase, “It is the thought that counts”? The thought does count, but the action shows. If I only ever tell my wife that I love her and never show her, she will not believe me and I will be proving myself a liar, a fake, and a hypocrite. Example of hypocrites: chocolate bunnies at Easter (has the form and appearance, but empty inside) that are a great disappointment when we find out what is really on the inside. John is not condemning encouragement, but he is clearly stating that talking the talk is not enough—walking the walk is required. **Guzik quoting Stott quoting Lewis: It is easier to be enthusiastic about Humanity with a capital ‘H’ than it is to love individual men and women, especially those who are uninteresting, exasperating, depraved, or otherwise unattractive. Loving everybody in general may be an excuse for loving nobody in particular.** Love not only sees the need and speaks out towards the need, love acts out towards the need. Love works.]. **19 And by this** [by our loving actions] **we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure** [persuade, assure, have confidence in] **our hearts before Him** [Test #2: Am I **confident**? One of the proofs of our salvation and relationship with God is that we do the work. When we do the work, the work helps to persuade/assure our hearts that we are in Him.]. **20 For if our heart condemns** [finds fault within, accuses, condemns, blames] **us** [when we know our words do not match our works], **God is greater** [greater, larger, elder, stronger] **than our heart, and knows all things.** [There are two ways to understand this verse: **Plummer: This is an awful thought for the impenitent, a blessed and encouraging thought for the penitent.** It reminds me of **Titus 1:15: To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled.** If you are right with God, this verse is encouraging—if you are not right with God, this verse is scary. **Have you ever tried to pray knowing that you had unconfessed sin in your life when you knew that your prayer was not being heard?** It is hard to have confidence in God if we are hiding sin. **Robertson’s New Testament Word Pictures: God’s omniscience is linked with his love and sympathy. God knows every secret in our hearts.** We can hide nothing from Him. In addition, we can rest in the knowledge that He is always good in all that He does at all times in all places. Love gives us an opportunity to determine if our hearts condemn us. If we see no evidence of working love, we should have pause for concern. Love checks.] **21 Beloved** [*agapetos*—the adjective form of *agape*], **if our heart does not condemn** [finds fault within, accuses, condemns, blames] **us, we have confidence** [freedom in speaking, unreservedness in speech, openness, frankness, no concealment, confidence, cheerful courage, boldness, assurance] **toward God.** [**Guzik: Condemnation can well up inside us that has nothing to do with our standing before God. It may be the work of the enemy of our souls (who, according to Revelation 12:10 accuses the brethren), or the work of an over-active conscience. At those times, we trust in what God’s Word says about our standing, not how we feel about it.** It is a comforting thing to know that God’s Word is rock-solid even when our hearts falter. We will all have moments of doubt and lack of faith—but God’s Word is true and sure and can always be trusted. Again, love gives us an opportunity to determine if our hearts condemn us. There will be times when we are in God’s will and doing God’s work when we doubt—it is then that we lean on His Word and take the confidence from it instead of from ourselves. Love checks.] **22 And whatever we ask** [to ask, beg, call for, crave, desire, require] **we receive** [lay hold of, receive, catch] **from Him, because we keep** [attend to carefully, take care of, guard, observe] **His commandments and do** [do, make, produce, author, act well, carry out, execute, celebrate] **those things that are pleasing** [agreeable] **in His sight** [presence] [Test #3: Am I **receiving**? When we are right before God and are doing His work His way with

a clear conscience, this verse applies. It does not apply in a vacuum—it only applies when the conditions above are met (doing the work God's way and having confidence in God). **Guzik: It is sobering to look at our lives and see how much we do to please ourselves and how much we do to please the Lord. We shouldn't think that the two are opposites; God is glorified when we enjoy His goodness and His good things. Yet, the godly life will have special focus on just pleasing God, even if it doesn't particularly please us at the moment. When was the last time we prayed for something that would please God? When was the last time we came before God in total confidence?** If you look around in your life and see no evidence of answered prayer, it may be because those conditions for answered prayer are not being met—doing God's work God's way and having confidence in God. Love collects.]. **23 And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.**

### The Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error

**24 Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.**

### 1 John 4

**1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, 3 and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God** [If you ever think you are around a demonic spirit, ask it if Jesus Christ is God. If the answer is yes, relax. If the answer is no, get out of there.]. **And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.**

**4 You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. 5 They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them. 6 We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.**

### Knowing God Through Love

**7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God** [God started this thing called love, has demonstrated it perfectly for over 6,000 years and begs and commands us to join it with Him]; **and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9 In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation** [appeasement of anger—the thing that makes your spouse happy when he/she is mad at you is the thing that Jesus did for us before God] **for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.** [Do you see a theme here?]

### Seeing God Through Love

**12 No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. 13 By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. 14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world. 15**

**Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. 16 And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.**

### **The Consummation of Love**

**17 Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. 19 We love Him because He first loved us.**

### **Obedience by Faith**

**20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? 21 And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God *must* love his brother also.**

Challenge: Love

### **Apply (What is the point?)**

1. God is in the assurance business—He wants to give assurance
2. God knows our hearts
3. God's love will overwhelm us at the beginning and at the end of our lives

### **Personalize (What do I do with that?)**

1. Know where you stand before God (use your conscience and use your Bible)
2. Rest in the fact that He is good (and then get to **work** loving people)
3. Know, experience, share, and show God's love

# The Essential 100

---

## A Bible overview plan for 2011-2012

The Essential 100 (E100) is a systematic approach that guides readers through the big picture of the Bible. It is a carefully selected list of short Bible passages—50 from the Old Testament and 50 from the New Testament. Each testament is broken up into ten, five-week series. We will move from Old to New Testaments every five weeks. My goal is to teach three of the five lessons in every series.

The E100 in Sunday school: We will REAP (read, explain, apply, and personalize) one passage each week and finish a series every five weeks. Each lesson will include a key verse for memorization. At the end of two years, we will have covered the essential 100 passages in the Bible.

Additional information: To learn more about The E100 program and to obtain additional resources, visit [e100challenge.com](http://e100challenge.com). Our Sunday school website is [stuartheights.org/sundayschool](http://stuartheights.org/sundayschool).

## The Schedule: The Revelation

This is our tenth and last series in the New Testament. So far, we have looked at The Early Years of Jesus, The Teachings of Jesus, the Miracles of Jesus, The Final Days of Jesus, The Church is Born, The Travels of Paul, Letters to the Early Church, Letters to the Early Church Leaders, and The Apostles' Teaching.

Date	Lesson	Key Verse(s)	Passage	Speaker
November 18	A Voice and a Vision	Revelation 1:17-18	Revelation 1	Jim Fleming
November 25	Messages to the Churches	Revelation 3:21-22	Revelation 2-3	Jim Fleming
December 2	The Throne of Heaven	Revelation 7:11-12	Revelation 4-7	Keith Chrisman
December 9	Hallelujah!	Revelation 19:6-7	Revelation 19-20	Barry Cole
December 16	The New Jerusalem	Revelation 21:2-4	Revelation 21-22	Jim Fleming

# The Revelation: A Voice and a Vision

---

## Introduction

Written by the Apostle John around 95 AD (the last New Testament book written)

**Wikipedia:** A title came into usage from the first word of the book in Koine Greek: *apokalypsis*, meaning, “unveiling,” or, “revelation.” It is also known as the *Book of the Revelation of Saint John the Divine* or the *Apocalypse of John* (both in reference to its author), or the *Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ* (in reference to its opening line), or simply *Revelation* (often erroneously called *Revelations* in contrast to the singular in the original Koine), or the *Apocalypse*.

## The players

Jesus Christ: the central figure and the One being unveiled

The **Apostle** John: the author of the **Gospel of John**, **1 John**, **2 John**, and **3 John**

The churches: seven real churches that existed at that time

The Old Testament: **David Guzik: The Book of Revelation is rooted in the Old Testament. It contains more than 500 allusions to the Old Testament, and 278 of the 404 verses in Revelation (that is almost 70%) make some reference to the Old Testament.**

Satan and his forces (who lose repeatedly, by the way)

## The Outline (we will predominately focus on the bold areas)

1. **The Introduction (Revelation 1)**
2. **Messages for seven churches of Asia (Revelation 2-3)**
3. **The throne of God (Revelation 4-5)**
4. Seven seals and seven trumpets (Revelation 6-11)
5. The Second and Third Woes (Revelation 12-16)
6. Aftermath of Babylon the Great (Revelation 17-18)
7. **The Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:1-10)**
8. **The Millennium (Revelation 19:11-20:6)**
9. **Post-Millennium (Revelation 20:7-20:15)**
10. **The New Heaven and Earth (Revelation 21:1-22:5)**
11. **Conclusion (Revelation 22:6-21)**

## Preview: The Beginning of the End and the End of the Beginning

Just as we began Genesis with Jesus (the Word without whom nothing was made, according to **John 1**), we end it all beginning with Jesus. All of human history points to Him and it ends with His unveiling.

Revelation can be a tricky book to understand, but keep this thought in mind: God knows what He is doing, He knows when He is going to do it, and He knows whom He will involve in it. We trust Him.

Key thought: It all started with Jesus, it is all about Jesus, and it will all end with **Jesus**

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Revelation 1 (Author = John)

### Introduction and Benediction

**1 The Revelation** [*apokalupsis*, laying bare, making naked, disclosure of truth, instruction, manifestation, appearance; our word **apocalypse** comes from this Greek word] **of Jesus Christ** [**David Guzik: This book is Jesus' Revelation in the sense that it belongs to Him, He is the one doing the revealing. It is also Jesus' Revelation in the sense that He is the object revealed; Jesus is the person revealed by the book. This book is about Jesus.**], **which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place** [**Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures: It is a relative term to be judged in the light of 2 Peter 3:8 according to God's clock, not ours**]. **And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant**



**John** [Adam Clarke: It came from God to Christ, from Christ to the angel, from the angel to John, and from John to the Church], **2 who bore witness** [Greek is *marturia*, which originally meant to give testimony, but evolved into time to be the word for martyr—one who **died** for his or her testimony] **to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. 3 Blessed is he** [singular] **who reads and those** [plural] **who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it** [There is a special blessing for us who read, hear, and keep the things in **Revelation**—so it should be studied. **David Guzik: This is the first of seven beatitudes of Revelation (Revelation 1:3, 14:13, 16:15, 19:9, 20:6, 22:7, and 22:14).**]; **for the time is near.** [David Guzik: Shortly is the ancient Greek phrase *en tachei*, which means “‘quickly or suddenly coming to pass,’ indicating rapidity of execution after the beginning takes place. The idea is not that the event may occur soon, but that when it does, it will be sudden.” (Walvoord). My daughter’s school had lockdown practice last week. She told me she hoped lockdown would not be in one particular classroom. I asked her why (thinking she may just not like that teacher). Her answer surprised me, “Because I don’t know what to do in that room in a lockdown.” I told her I hoped she did have lockdown practice in that room because the purpose of practice is to be ready. We are called by John to be ready in our obedience for all situations in all **times**, **for the time is near.**]

### Greeting the Seven Churches

**4 John, to the seven churches which are in Asia** [David Guzik: This was the Roman province of Asia, which is the western part of modern day Turkey. The way this is worded in the English almost implies that there were only seven churches in Asia Minor, but there were many, many more at this time—Jesus just picked these seven for His special purpose]:

**Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.**

**To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood** [David Guzik: Notice the order: first loved, then washed. It wasn’t that God washed us out of some sense of duty, and then loved us because we were then clean. He loved us while we were dirty, but **then** He washed us.], **6 and has made us kings and priests** [David Guzik: In the Old Testament, it was forbidden to combine the offices of king and priest. King Uzziah of Judah is an example of a man who tried to combine the two offices, and paid the penalty for it (2 Chronicles 26:16-23). But under the New Covenant, we can be like Jesus in the sense that He is both King and High Priest (Luke 1:31-33; Hebrews 4:14).] **to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.**

**7 Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.**

**8 “I am the Alpha** [the first letter of the Greek alphabet] **and the Omega** [the last letter of the Greek alphabet], **the Beginning and the End,” says the Lord, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty** [the one who has His hand on everything].”

## Vision of the Son of Man

**9 I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos** [an island in the Aegean Sea about 30 miles in circumference—it was a Roman penal colony and the prisoners mined **marble** **for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.** **10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, 11 saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book** [John is commanded to write 12 times in **Revelation**] **and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."** [David Guzik: Interestingly, the Apostle Paul also wrote to seven churches: Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Colossae, Philippi, and Thessaloniki]

**12 Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band** [David Guzik; Exodus 39:1-5 says that there were golden threads in the band that went around the chest of the high priest of Israel. Jesus' band has more than a few golden threads. It is all gold! How much greater is the eternal, heavenly priesthood of Jesus! Jesus is the true and better priest.]. **14 His head and hair were white like wool** [Jesus is the true and better Lamb], **as white as snow** [Jesus is the true and better pure sacrifice], **and His eyes like a flame of fire** [Jesus is the true and better judgment]; **15 His feet were like fine brass** [Jesus is the true and better foundation], **as if refined in a furnace** [Jesus is the true and better purity], **and His voice as the sound of many waters** [Jesus is the true and better water, the true and better word, and the true and better voice speaking into our lives]; **16 He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword** [Jesus is the true and better warrior], **and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength** [Jesus is the true and better light—and He lit the stars with His glory]. **17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me** [even with all of those competing things in His hand, He touched John], **saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last** [Jesus is the true and better beginning and the true and better ending]. **18 I am He who lives** [Jesus is the true and better life], **and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore** [Jesus is the true and better resurrection]. **Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death** [Jesus is the true and better champion—He stood in the middle of two camps and fought for us—AND **WON!**]. **19 Write the things which you have seen** [Revelation 1], **and the things which are** [Revelation 2-3], **and the things which will take place after this** [Revelation 4-22]. **20 The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.** [Jesus is the true and better **answer**. This is the real Jesus—not some effeminate display that you see in paintings. My Jesus is strong, victorious, powerful, and loves His children. David Guizk: this is the only physical description of Jesus given to us in the Bible.]

## Apply (What is the point?)

1. Jesus started it all and will **end** it all
2. **Revelation** is not to be ignored
3. Jesus is better than anything else

## Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Always be on the lookout for Jesus
2. Study all the Bible, not just your favorite parts
3. Treasure Him, His Word, and His **people**

# The Revelation: Messages to the Churches

---

## Preview: The Postman

**Ray C. Stedman:** There were many other churches in the province of Asia at the time John wrote this letter. Others of them could have been selected, but only these seven were chosen. They were not even the best known churches in Asia. . . . The word “angel” appears many times in the book outside these seven letters, and in every case it refers to a heavenly being—what we normally think of as an angel. It is suggestive here that each church has a heavenly being responsible for guiding the human leadership. There is a pattern to the structure of these letters: a description of the city, something about Jesus, a commendation, a condemnation, some type of counsel, and finishes with a challenge.

Key thought: Jesus has a message (no matter what your status is)

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Revelation 2-3 (Author = John)

### Revelation 2

#### Ephesus: The Loveless Church

In the first century AD it was a significant seaport city with a population of 250,000 and is a swamp now. Ephesus was primarily known for the Temple of Artemis. The Temple was an entirely marble structure that was 425 feet long by 220 feet wide and 120 columns. Only one of its columns still exists today.

A lesser-known structure in Ephesus was their theatre. It held an estimated 44,000 people and is believed to have been the largest outdoor theater in the world at that time.

The church at Ephesus was started by Paul (you can read about that in [Acts 19](#)). Paul worked there himself later on and wrote two letters to a young pastor named Timothy ([1 Timothy](#) and [2 Timothy](#)). Church tradition says that after John wrote [Revelation](#) he went to Ephesus and lived the rest of his life.

**1 “To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, ‘These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: 2 “I know your works, your labor** [literally, a beating—from the Greek word which means to beat your chest in sorrow], **your patience** [steadfastness, constancy, endurance], **and that you cannot bear** [take up, carry] **those who are evil** [bad nature, troublesome, injurious, pernicious, destructive]. **And you have tested those who say** [affirm, allege, portend or profess] **they are apostles** [a delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders] **and are not, and have found** [to find by thought—where we get our English word heuristics] **them liars** [false, deceitful]; **3 and you have persevered** [take up, carry] **and have** [hold, echo] **patience** [steadfastness, constancy, endurance], **and have labored** [to be tired and exhausted from labor] **for My name’s sake and have not become weary** [sick of it]. **4 Nevertheless I have** [hold, echo] **this against you, that you have left** [literally, to send away, to leave: also used of a husband divorcing his wife] **your first love** [*agape* love]. [The first Love did not leave them and they did not lose their first Love. **J.** **Hampton Keathley, III: Labor is no substitute for love.] 5 Remember** [imperative] **therefore from where you have fallen; repent** [an imperative meaning to change your mind] **and do** [imperative] **the**

**first works** [primary business], **or else I will come to you quickly and remove** [riot, disturb, throw in to a commotion] **your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.** **6 But this you have** [hold, echo], **that you hate** [detest] **the deeds of the Nicolaitans** [a group upholding the liberty of eating things sacrificed to idols and fornication], **which I also hate** [detest].

**7 “He who has an ear, let him hear** [imperative to the individual] **what the Spirit says to the churches.** **To him who overcomes** [conquers, the Greek where we get our word Nike (meaning victorious)] **I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.”**

### Smyrna: The Persecuted Church

“Smyrna” means “myrrh.” It is used as a fragrance. Myrrh is basically tree sap that has been dried out and is then subsequently crushed and burned to make sweet fragrances that were used as perfumes and embalming agents. It is currently used in everything from toothpaste to toiletries. Smyrna is an old city, with periods of activity and inactivity stretching back to 3,000 BC (from death to life to death to life).

Smyrna was located on a significant trade route and it was a very wealthy city at the time John wrote **Revelation**. Geographically, it is situated at the end of a long land-locked harbor making it a very safe harbor. Many of the buildings from the older parts of Smyrna are located on a hill and the shape of the buildings looks like a crown on the hill, so it is referred to as the, “Crown of Smyrna.”

About the time that Smyrna was rebuilt, Smyrna switched allegiances from Pergamum to the Romans. To elevate their status with Rome, the city created the goddess Roma to worship Rome itself.

**8 “And to the angel of the church in Smyrna** [myrrh] **write,**

**‘These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life: 9 “I know** [to perceive because having seen] **your works** [business, employment, what you are occupied with, what you make, what you are doing], **tribulation** [pressing together, distress, straits—used to describe pressing grapes together], **and poverty** [used of beggars—this standard of living was probably worsened by the tribulation] **(but you are rich** [abounding in material resources or Christian virtues that are eternal possessions]); **and I know the blasphemy** [slander, injurious speech to another’s good name] **of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue** [assembly] **of Satan** [adversary]. [There is no condemnation against Smyrna] **10 Do not fear** [an imperative; Greek word is *phobeo* (where we get our English word phobia) meaning to put to flight by terrifying] **any of those things** [things or people] **which you are about to** [to intend or have in mind to] **suffer** [used of sick people]. **Indeed** [an imperative meaning to pay attention], **the devil** [slanderer, false accuser] **is about to** [to be on the point of doing or to intend or have in mind to] **throw** [to throw or let go of a thing without caring where it falls] **some of you into prison, that you may be tested** [testing of faith to attempt to entice in to sin— **Vance Havner: They were not promised deliverance from tribulation, poverty and reviling. In fact, the worst was yet to come.**], **and you will have** [hold, echo] **tribulation** [same word as in verse 9] **ten days. Be** [an imperative] **faithful** [literally, keep on being faithful; the Greek word is *pistos*, meaning one who is faithful in the execution of their business or duties, one that can be relied upon] **until death, and I will give you the crown** [there are two types of crowns in Greek: one for a king and one for a winner—this crown is for the winner] **of life.**

**11 “He who has an ear, let him hear** [an imperative] **what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes** [Nike] **shall** [absolutely] **not** [never (a double negative in the Greek, which unlike English, emphasizes rather than cancels out the meaning)] **be hurt by the second death.”**

### **Pergamos: The Compromising Church**

Pergamos was geographically 16 miles from the Aegean Sea (the first of our seven cities that is not a port city) and means “elevation.” It was an acropolis (a city on the edge) located on a promontory (a prominent land mass overlooking lower lying land). Cities, forts, and castles are built here because of their defensive properties. Pergamos no longer exists today, but a small city named Bergama exists close to the ancient ruins and has about 55,000 people while ancient Pergamos had closer to 150,000.

#### **Upper Acropolis:**

- The altar (open-air altar dedicated to Zeus )
- A 10,000 seat theater (the steepest of any ancient theater)
- The library (the second best in the ancient Greek civilization). It contained 200,000 volumes.

#### **Lower Acropolis:**

- upper, middle, and lower gymnasiums
- temple of Demeter and the sanctuary of Hera

#### **Asclepieion (3 km south):**

- sanctuary of Asclepius—the god of healing
- **Barclay: Sufferers were allowed to spend the night in . . . the temple. In the temple there were tame snakes. In the night, the sufferer might be touched. . . . The touch of the snake was held to be the touch of the god himself, and the touch was held to bring health and healing.**
- a healing spring (patients would bathe here)

The church in Pergamos is not mentioned elsewhere in Scripture and is not the ‘Perga’ in [Acts 13-14](#).

**12 “And to the angel of the church in Pergamos** [elevation] **write,**

**‘These things says He who has** [holds, possesses] **the sharp** [swift, quick] **two-edged** [having a double mouth] **sword: 13 “I know** [I have perceived it because I have seen it] **your works** [business, employment, what you’re occupied with, what you make, what you are doing], **and where you dwell** [settle], **where Satan’s** [adversary (one who opposes another in purpose or act)] **throne** [chair] **is. And you hold fast** [keep on holding on to] **to My name** [name, cause], **and did not deny My faith** [conviction of the truth of anything, belief] **even in the days in which Antipas** [against all] **was My faithful** [trusty] **martyr, who was killed among** [beside, near] **you, where Satan dwells** [settle]. **14 But** [Nevertheless] **I have** [hold, possess] **a few** [small number of] **things against you, because you have** [hold, possess] **there those who hold the doctrine** [teaching] **of Balaam** [literally, ‘perhaps’; Balaam’s story is in [Numbers 22-24](#)], **who taught Balak** [a devastator or spoiler] **to put** [to throw or let go of a thing without caring where it falls] **a stumbling block** [Greek = *skandalon*, the movable stick or trigger of a trap] **before**

[in the presence of] **the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality** [Greek = *porneuo* (the root word for our English pornography); prostitution, unlawful sexual intercourse. **David Guzik: Sexual immorality marked the whole culture of the ancient Roman Empire. . . To paraphrase the Roman statesman Cicero . . . “If there is anyone who thinks that young men should not be allowed the love of many women, he is extremely severe.”**]. **15 Thus** [In this manner] **you also have** [hold, possess] **those who hold** [hold, possess] **the doctrine** [teaching] **of the Nicolaitans** [literally, ‘destruction of people’; a group upholding the liberty of eating things sacrificed to idols as well as committing fornication], **which thing I hate**. **16 Repent** [an imperative, to change your mind], **or else** [otherwise] **I will come to you quickly** [without delay] **and will fight** [war] **against them with the sword of My mouth**.

**17 “He who has** [holds, possesses] **an ear, let him hear** [an imperative] **what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes** [conquers, the Greek is the verb form of the English word Nike (meaning victorious)] **I will give some of the hidden** [concealed] **manna** [literally, what is it; the food that fed the Israelites in the wilderness] **to eat. And I will give him a white** [light, bright] **stone, and on the stone a new** [fresh] **name written which no one knows except him who receives** [takes] **it.”**

### Thyatira: The Corrupt Church

Thyatira means “odor of affliction”

**Wikipedia: It was famous for its dyeing and was a center of the indigo trade. Among the ancient ruins of the city, inscriptions have been found relating to the guild of dyers in the city. Indeed, more guilds are known in Thyatira than any other contemporary city in the Roman province of Asia (inscriptions mention the following: wool-workers, linen-workers, makers of outer garments, dyers, leather-workers, tanners, potters, bakers, slave-dealers, and bronze-smiths).**

**David Guzik: Thyatira was the smallest and least important of the seven cities Jesus addresses in Revelation 2 and 3.** When Paul was going through Philippi, he met Lydia (from Thyatira) in **Acts 16:13-15**, but the church in Thyatira is not mentioned elsewhere in Scripture.

Today, the city of Akhisar (‘white castle’) sits on the ruins of Thyatira and about 100,000 live there.

**18 “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira** [odor of affliction] **write,**

**‘These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass: 19 “I know** [I have perceived it because I have seen it] **your works** [business, employment, what you’re occupied with, what you make, what you are doing], **love** [agape love], **service** [*diakonos*—where we get our English word for deacon (a servant)], **faith** [trust, conviction], **and your patience** [steadfastness, constancy, endurance] [**Ray C. Stedman: Love leads to service; faith leads to perseverance. If you love God, you will serve his people. You cannot help it. It is the sign that you love that you are willing to serve.**]; **and as for your works** [business, employment, what you are occupied with, what you make, what you are doing], **the last are more than the first** [meaning these traits are growing]. **20 Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow** [permit, give up, let go, leave alone] **that woman Jezebel** [ironically enough, ‘chaste’], **who calls** [says about] **herself a prophetess, to teach**



**and seduce** [to cause or lead away from the right way; to deceive one away from the truth] **My servants to commit sexual immorality** [prostitution, sexual idolatry, or any unlawful sexual intercourse] **and eat things sacrificed to idols** [Ray C. Stedman: Evidently there was in the church at Thyatira a woman who was a very dominant leader. Jesus names her “Jezebel.” . . . Here he chooses the name of the most evil woman in the Old Testament. . . . [The New Testament Jezebel] taught that it was all right for Christians to indulge in sexual immorality and in idolatry. . . . Here is the link with the trade unions of Thyatira. In order to work in these unions, which constituted the entire business of the city, Christians had to join a union, or guild, made up of pagans for the most part. . . . [from William Barclay] “*These guilds met frequently, and they met for a common meal. Such a meal was, at least in part, a religious ceremony. It would probably meet in a heathen temple, and it would certainly begin with a libation* [pouring of a drink offering] *to the gods, and the meal itself would largely consist of meat offered to idols.*” . . . In order to make a living they had to belong to a union, but to attend the union was to become involved, or to be sorely pressured to become involved, with the worship of idols and with licentious and lascivious debauchery. So they had to make a choice. . . . Apparently Jezebel had begun to teach that it was all right for them to go along with the requirements of the guild, that they needed to submit to the pressures of the world around in order to make a living, and that God would understand and overlook this. David Guzik: One ancient Christian named Tertullian wrote about Christians who made their living in trades connected to pagan idolatry. . . . [and then] justify this by saying, “This is my living, and I must live.” Tertullian replied . . . “Must you live?”. **21 And I gave her time to repent** [change of mind leading to a change of actions] **of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.** **22 Indeed** [an imperative meaning to look, or see] **I will cast** [to throw without concern of where a thing falls] **her into a sickbed** [William Barclay: The word for a *banqueting couch*; and if that meaning is taken, the meaning is: ‘I will strike her down as she sits at her forbidden feasts.’], **and those who commit adultery with her** [speaking specifically to those she has seduced into sexual relations] **into great tribulation** [major oppression, affliction, tribulation, distress, straits], **unless they repent of their deeds** [business, employment, what you are occupied with, what you make, what you are doing]. **23 I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know** [understand, get acquainted with the fact] **that I am He who searches** [examines] **the minds** [kidneys (place of emotion)] **and hearts** [place of intellect]. **And I will give to each one of you according to your works** [business, employment, what you’re occupied with, what you make, what you are doing].

**24 “Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have** [hold] **this doctrine** [teaching], **who have not known** [understand, get acquainted with the fact] **the depths of Satan** [God has ‘deep things’ as well (note **1 Corinthians 2:10**); Ray C. Stedman: Whenever God has something good, Satan imitates it], **as they say, I will put on you** [to throw without concern of where a thing falls] **no other burden** [heaviness, weight, burden, trouble]. **25 But hold fast** [an imperative] **what you have** [hold] **till I come** [am present].

**26 And he who overcomes** [conquers, the Greek is the verb form of the English word Nike (meaning victorious)], **and keeps** [guards carefully] **My works** [business, employment, what you are occupied with, what you make, what you are doing] **until the end, to him I will give power** [legal governmental power] **over the nations—**



**27** *'He shall rule* [to feed, to tend a flock, keep sheep] *them with a rod* [staff] *of iron;*  
*They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels'* [from [Psalm 2:9](#)]

—as I also have received from My Father; **28** and I will give him the morning star.

**29** *"He who has* [holds, possesses] *an ear, let him hear* [an imperative] *what the Spirit says to the churches."*

## Revelation 3

### Sardis: The Dead Church

Sardis means "red ones." [Ray C. Stedman](#): Sardis was built on a mountain spur about 1,500 feet above the valley floor. It was regarded as virtually impregnable to military assault. It was as geographically secure as it could get. [Ray C. Stedman](#): Sardis was once one of the greatest cities of the world. It had been the capital of the ancient kingdom of Lydia, and in the 6th century BC was ruled by a fabulously wealthy king whose name, Croesus [pronounced CREE'-sus], became a byword for uncounted wealth.

[J. Hampton Keathley, III](#): Sardis was devoted to the worship of the mother-goddess Cybele [pronounced, Sybil-E'—similar to "Mother Earth"] and no temple worshipper was allowed to approach the temple of the gods with soiled or unclean garments. A white and clean robe was required.

The church in Sardis is not mentioned anywhere else in the Scripture.

**1** *"And to the angel of the church in Sardis* [red ones] *write,*

*'These things says He who has* [holds] *the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars* [representing the seven churches as stated in [Revelation 1:20](#)]: *"I know* [I have perceived it because I have seen it] *your works* [business, employment, what you are occupied with, what you make, what you are doing], *that you have* [hold] *a name* [name, cause] *that you are alive* [alive and enjoying life], *but you are dead* [from the Greek root word that means corpse]. [[Ray C. Stedman](#): They had a good reputation, but it was actually a dead church. The members of it were for the most part not even believers. . . . Hollywood has given us a name for people like that: it calls them "Zombies"—corpses that are alive . . . but they are really dead.] **2** *Be* [an imperative] *watchful* [the root word means to wake up and the tense indicates that this should be done continuously; keep on watching, keep on being alert, keep on waking up], *and strengthen* [an imperative; stabilize, place firmly, set fast, fix, make firm, confirm] *the things which remain* [the rest of the things—the things that are not fully dead], *that are ready* [about to, to intend to] *to die, for I have not found* [observed, found, discovered] *your works* [business, employment, what you are occupied with, what you make, what you are doing] *perfect* [full, complete] *before* [in the presence of] *God.* **3** *Remember* [an imperative; recall] *therefore how* [the way] *you have received and heard* [heard, understood, comprehended]; *hold fast* [an imperative; take care of this, guard it, keep it in the state that it was] *and repent* [an imperative; change your mind]. *Therefore if you will not watch* [to pay attention unless through neglect destruction overtakes you; the root word means to wake up], *I will come upon you* [I will arrive unexpectedly] *as a thief* [an embezzler, a pilferer—one who does not care about what he takes], *and you will not know* [a double negative in the Greek;

meaning to perceive, understand, be acquainted with] **what hour** [any specific time period] **I will come upon** [arrive unexpectedly to] **you**. [Ray C. Stedman: This church in Sardis was so devoid of life that it actually had no struggles going on within it. There was no reason for Satan to mount an offensive attack because no one was mounting an attack against Satan—Sardis was not a threat. George B. Caird: A perfect model of inoffensive Christianity.] **4 You have** [hold] **a few** [small number of] **names** [names, causes] **even in Sardis who have not defiled** [polluted, stained, contaminated, defiled; the root word means black] **their garments; and they shall walk** [progress, walk, live their lives] **with** [with, after, behind] **Me in white** [light, brightness], **for** [because] **they are worthy** [have weight or substance]. **5 He who overcomes** [conquers, the Greek is the verb form of the English word Nike (meaning victorious)] **shall be clothed** [surrounded, clothed] **in white** [light, brightness] **garments** [like the angel in Matthew 28:3], **and I will not blot out** [a double negative in the Greek—actually the strongest negative possible in the entire Greek language; meaning to wipe out, wipe away, obliterate] **his name** [name, cause] **from the Book** [book, scroll] **of Life; but I will confess** [to acknowledge openly and joyfully; the root of this word is the normal Greek word for confess (meaning to say the same thing about); this word means to say the same thing about with great joy] **his name** [name, cause] **before** [in the presence of] **My Father and before** [in the presence of] **His angels**. [a reference to Matthew 10:32 and Luke 12:8]

**6 “He who has** [holds, possesses] **an ear, let him hear** [imperative] **what the Spirit says to the churches.”** [David Guzik: It is easy to drift in sleepy apathy towards spiritual death, especially when you have a good reputation (people recognize that you are mature in Christ), and when you place a high value on stability. But there is always hope for the dead church, because Jesus is an expert at raising the dead.]

### Philadelphia: The Faithful Church

Philadelphia means “brotherly love.” Wikipedia: Was established in 189 BC by King Eumenes II. . . . Eumenes II named the city for the love of his brother . . . Attalus II, whose loyalty [Romans offered to support Attalus II in overthrowing his brother and he declined] earned him the nickname, “Philadelphos”—“one who loves his brother.”

William Barclay: Philadelphia had so many gods and so many temples that sometimes men called it ‘Little Athens’. . . . Philadelphia honored its illustrious sons by putting their names on the pillars of its temples. The church at Philadelphia is not mentioned elsewhere in Scripture.

**7 “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia** [brotherly love] **write,**

**‘These things says He who is holy, He who is true** [meaning, ‘true and not fake,’ not, ‘true and not false’], **“He who has** [holds] **the key of David, He who opens and no one** [no man/no thing] **shuts** [closes], **and shuts and no one** [no man/no thing] **opens”**: **8 “I know** [I have perceived it because I have seen it] **your works** [business, employment, what you are occupied with, what you make, what you are doing]. **See** [indeed, behold, look, see; an imperative], **I have set** [given] **before you** [in your presence] **an open door** [an opportunity—Paul uses this same imagery in 1 Corinthians 16:9], **and no one** [no man/no thing] **can** [has the power to, is able to] **shut** [close] **it** [himself]; **for you have** [hold] **a little strength** [dunamis; power, strength, ability—but even a little dynamite will blow things up], **have kept**

[taken care of this, guarded it, kept it in the state that it was] **My word, and have not denied My name** [name, cause]. **9 Indeed** [indeed, behold, look, see; an imperative] **I will make** [give] **those of** [out of, from] **the synagogue** [congregation] **of Satan** [the adversary], **who say they are Jews and are not, but** [nevertheless] **lie** [deliberately deceive by lying]—**indeed** [indeed, behold, look, see; an imperative] **I will make them come** [so that they come to seek an intimacy in order to become a follower: to come upon one (unexpectedly)] **and worship** [the Greek word is *proskuneo*, where we get our English word prostrate; it is a compound Greek word: the first part meaning to come near and the second part meaning a dog—the idea being that you come near someone and lick the hand (or more appropriate for this culture, kiss)—it was an idea of respect and showing submission to] **before** [in your presence] **your feet that I have loved** [*agapao*, welcomed, entertained, fond of, loved dearly] **you**. **10 Because you have kept** [taken care of this, guarded it, kept it in the state that it was] **My command** [word—command is far too strong a word to use here] **to persevere** [steadfastness, constancy, endurance, a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith by the greatest trials and sufferings], **I also** [likewise] **will keep** [take care of, guard, keep it in the state that it was] **you from** [out of, from, away from] **the hour** [hour, specific time] **of trial** [an experiment, attempt, trial, proving] **which shall** [is about to] **come upon the whole world, to test** [to try, make trial of, test: for the purpose of ascertaining his quantity, or what he thinks, or how he will behave himself] **those who dwell on the earth**. [There is no condemnation] **11 Behold** [indeed, behold, look, see; an imperative], **I am coming** [appearing] **quickly** [quickly, speedily, without delay—the idea is suddenness, not immediacy]! **Hold fast** [get possession of, master, rule, continue to handle] **what you have** [hold], [so] **that no one** [no man/no thing] **may take** [take, receive—i.e., beat you to the finish line] **your crown** [there are two types of crowns in Greek: one for a king and one for a winner—this crown is for the winner.]. **12 He who overcomes** [conquers, the Greek is the verb form of the English word Nike (meaning victorious)], **I will make him a pillar** [symbolic of stability and permanence—Paul refers to Peter, James, and John as pillars in **Galatians 2:9**] **in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more** [meaning to never leave that place like the Philadelphians had to do because of the constant earthquakes and tremors]. **I will write on him the name** [name, cause] **of My God and the name** [name, cause] **of the city of My God, the New** [unused, unworn, a new kind, unprecedented, novel, uncommon, unheard of] **Jerusalem, which comes down** [descends] **out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new** [unused, unworn, a new kind, unprecedented, novel, uncommon, unheard of] **name** [name, cause]. [The Philadelphians wrote on the pillars the names of those that were special because they thought the pillars would last a long time. God writes on us His name because we will last forever and we will be able to reflect His glory with His name on us.]

**13 “He who has** [holds, possesses] **an ear, let him hear** [an imperative] **what the Spirit says to the churches.”**

### Laodicea: The Lukewarm Church

Laodicea means “justice of the people” (or “rule of the people”). **J. Hampton Keathley, III: Laodicea was . . . a highly commercial and wealthy city.** Laodicea was primarily known for banking, manufacturing, and medicine. **Ray C. Stedman: A particular breed of black sheep were raised around this area, and the glossy, black wool was woven into special clothes that were sold here.**

**J. Hampton Keathley, III: Laodicea received its water through an aqueduct coming from a spring four miles to the south.** The water was lukewarm by the time it reached Laodicea.

**David Guzik: Poor water supply: If an enemy army surrounded the city, they had insufficient water supplies in the city, and the supplies coming into the city could be easily cut off. The leaders of Laodicea were always accommodating to any potential enemy, and always wanted to negotiate and compromise instead of fight.** Laodicea lies in ruin today.

Laodicea is mentioned five times in **Colossians**—the most significant is **Colossians 4:16**.

**14 “And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write,**

**‘These things says the Amen** [an expression of absolute trust and confidence], **the Faithful** [used of persons who show themselves faithful] **and True** [real, true, genuine] **Witness** [a witness who proves the genuineness of their faith in Christ by undergoing a violent death—used of Jesus in **Revelation 1:5**; used of Antipas (from Pergamos) in **Revelation 2:13**], **the Beginning** [beginning, origin, leader, active cause, extreme corner, first place—like a bookend] **of the creation** [the act of establishing] **of God:** [There is no commendation] **15 “I know** [I have perceived it because I have seen it] **your works** [business, employment, what you’re occupied with, what you make, what you are doing], **that you are neither cold nor hot** [boiling hot]. **I could wish** [used when you wish a thing to happen but know that it will probably will not be done—example: teenager cleaning his/her room] **you were cold or hot. 16 So then, because you are lukewarm** [tepid, lukewarm], **and neither cold nor hot, I will** [intend to] **vomit** [not spit, vomit] **you out of My mouth. 17 Because you say, ‘I am rich** [abounding in material resources or eternal possessions], **have become wealthy** [richly supplied], **and have** [hold] **need of nothing** [no thing, no one]’—**and do not know** [to have perceived because you have seen it] **that you are wretched** [afflicted with enduring toils and troubles], **miserable** [worthy of pity], **poor** [destitute to the point of being reduced to begging], **blind** [mentally or physically blind—the root word means to be blinded by pride], **and naked—18 I counsel you to buy** [to go to the market and buy] **from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich** [richly supplied]; **and white** [white, light] **garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame** [confusion, disgrace, shame, dishonor] **of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint** [rub; an imperative] **your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. 19 As many as I love** [*phileo*, brotherly love, fondness], **I rebuke** [convict, correct, punish] **and chasten** [to cause to learn, to scourge]. **Therefore be zealous** [burn with zeal; an imperative] **and repent** [change of mind leading to a change of actions]. **20 Behold** [See; an imperative], **I stand at the door and knock.** [David Guzik: Philadelphia was “The Church of the Open Door,” . . . Laodicea is “The Church of the Shut Out Jesus.”] **If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to** [near or towards] **him and dine with him, and he with Me. 21 To him who overcomes** [conquers, the Greek is the verb form of the English word Nike (meaning victorious)] **I will grant** [grant, give] **to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame** [conquered] **and sat down with My Father on His throne.**

**22 “He who has** [holds, possesses] **an ear, let him hear** [an imperative] **what the Spirit says to the churches.””**

### **Apply (What is the point?)**

1. Jesus and the Spirit have a message
2. Lack of self-evaluation can be deadly
3. The old problems are still around

### **Personalize (What do I do with that?)**

1. Listen carefully with a self-critical ear
2. Look closely with a self-critical eye
3. Implement the old solutions

# The Revelation: The Throne of Heaven

---

## Preview: True Worship

The word for revelation in the Greek language is *apokalupsis* and it means an uncovering, unveiling, or a disclosure. What this book reveals or uncovers is the glory of Jesus Christ. The gospels tell of Jesus as a baby wrapped in cloth being born in a barn on a bed of hay. Growing up, He was subject to earthly time and earthly parents and even grew in an area that was subject to Roman rule. Then, at God's appointed time, Jesus took His position on the cross as the sacrifice for all of our sins. He was persecuted, mocked, and laughed at as He hung there dying for us as the slain Lamb of God. Then, He conquered sin and death and He ascended to heaven. This is the Jesus we get to know in **Revelation 4-7**. This is the Jesus who began as the humble suffering servant and ends up as the all-powerful conquering king and judge. This is the Jesus that we bow down to and worship.

**Warren Wiersbe: True spiritual worship is perhaps one of the greatest needs in our individual lives and in our churches.** Heaven is a place of worship and we will worship our Lord for eternity, so maybe should get a head start. **Revelation 4-5** will help us get a better understanding of what true worship is. **Revelation 4** begins the third division of the book—**"the things which shall be hereafter."**

Key thought: Jesus deserves our true worship

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Revelation 4-7 (Author = John)

### Revelation 4

#### The Throne Room of Heaven

**1 After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."** [When I began reading this verse, I felt the Holy Spirit telling me to read it again and again. Moreover, as I read it again and again, I finally realized what I was missing/skimming over. There is something beautiful that I do not want to minimize. John looks and sees that the door to heaven is open. This tells me that we have access to where God is. We get the opportunity to look behind the curtains and see what Heaven is about. Is that not something to thank God for? I thank God for the open doors He gives us and if anybody is like me, I thank God for the doors He closed also (because there have been times in my life that I was in places that I should not have been).]

**2 Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne** [This is God the Father. Throne is a key word used 14 times in this chapter. This verse should give us comfort in knowing that God is on His throne so no matter what may happen in our lives, He is in complete control.]. **3 And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald** [There is no possible way to describe God's essence, so John uses a comparison to show the radiance of precious stones. The rainbow is a complete circle rather than horseshoe shaped because all things in heaven are complete. The rainbow also

signifies God's faithfulness to His word. A rainbow is usually seen after a storm but here it is seen before the storm.]. **4 Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads** [The 24 elders are the 12 tribes and the 12 apostles which are representative of all God's redeemed people. That means you and me!]. **5 And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God** [The thunder and lightning coming from the throne signify the righteous firestorm that God is about to unleash on a sinful world. Example: The storm coming out of a restaurant.].

**6 Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back** [The four creatures in the midst of the throne are cherubim and they do three things: guard the throne, lead worship, and proclaim God's holiness. They also illustrate the attributes of Jesus.]. **7 The first living creature was like a lion** [the majesty and power of Jesus], **the second living creature like a calf** [the humble and sacrificial service to God], **the third living creature had a face like a man** [Jesus' humanity], **and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle** [representing sovereignty; the text says a flying eagle not just an eagle; ask others what their texts say. To me, the only way to see the true essence of an eagle is to see while in flight. An eagle in flight is a spectacular display of majestic power with grace. No wonder the text says the face of a flying eagle.]. **8 The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying:**

**"Holy, holy, holy,  
Lord God Almighty,**

**Who was and is and is to come!"** [Here they are worshipping God the Father day and night without rest—not just on Sunday and Wednesday]

Have the guys sit down in the chairs beside you to receive the crowns.

**9 Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying:**

**11 "You are worthy, O Lord,  
To receive glory and honor and power;  
For You created all things,  
And by Your will they exist and were created."**

As we learned earlier, the 24 elders represent us so we are given crowns to wear. In [Revelation 2](#), the faithful ones are called overcomers or *nike* in the Greek. We do many things to overcome and receive crowns. We receive crowns for being faithful even when your ship is on the bottom of an ocean (Barry). We receive crowns for dedicating our lives to bring the good news to a group of people thousands of miles away (Terry). We receive crowns for putting in countless time and effort into teaching God's word (Jim). We receive crowns for being a strong witness to our children (Bobby). We receive crowns for never letting go of Jesus even when you are in the biggest fight of your life battling cancer (Josh).



Chandalee receives a crown because we all know who wears the crown in my family and for being pretty. Whenever the four cherubim would glorify, the 24 elders (us) would fall before the throne and worship God by casting their crowns at His feet. This is a picture of what true worship looks like, it all belongs to God. God alone is responsible for our rewards we have received. True worship occurs when we **separate** ourselves from our honor and cast it at the feet of our king.

## Revelation 5

### The Lamb Takes the Scroll

**1 And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals** [We begin to see the worship of the redeemer Jesus. The focus of praise and worship is now shifted to the Lamb of God. In Roman times, the Romans would seal their scrolls seven times to prevent unauthorized entry so that the scroll could only be opened by the appointed person. The writing on both sides of the scroll signifies that nothing else could be added, it is a completed and finished document.]. **2 Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?” 3 And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it.**

**4 So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. 5 But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David** [both are messianic titles of Jesus Christ the Messiah], **has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.”**

**6 And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. 7 Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.** [Notice here that the elder told John to look up and watch the lion who has prevailed take the scroll from the Father. However, when John looks up, he sees a slain lamb instead of lion. Jesus Christ is called the Lamb 28 times in [Revelation](#). He is the true Passover lamb and the scars are still visible from the slaughter He received. However, He is not dead but still standing. In fact, the seven horns tell us that His power is complete, the seven eyes tell us His wisdom is complete, and the seven Spirits tell us His presence is perfect and complete. This is why we worship Jesus: for **who** He is (the worthy One, the prevailed Lamb of God). This is why we worship Jesus: for **where** He is (in the midst of the throne).]

### Worthy Is the Lamb

**8 Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints** [Notice when the Lamb took the scroll the weeping ended and the praising began. The praise and worship was united. The incense is a picture of the prayers rising up to the throne and into the nostrils of God. This is why we worship Jesus: because of **what** He does (He takes the scroll from the Father).]. **9 And they sang a new song, saying:**

**"You are worthy to take the scroll,  
And to open its seals;  
For You were slain,  
And have redeemed us to God by Your blood  
Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,  
10 And have made us kings and priests to our God;**

**And we shall reign on the earth."** [This hymn is a worship hymn that has three parts: it is a **missionary** hymn (He was slain for all the people), it is a **devotional** hymn (it states our unique position as kingdom priests), and it is a **prophetic** hymn ("we shall reign on the earth")]

**11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands** [signifying innumerable], **12 saying with a loud voice:**

**"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain  
To receive power and riches and wisdom,  
And strength and honor and glory and blessing!"**

**13 And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying:**

**"Blessing and honor and glory and power  
Be to Him who sits on the throne,  
And to the Lamb, forever and ever!"**

**14 Then the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.** [This is why we worship Jesus: because of what He **has** (all the power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and blessing). The praise ended in a corporate worship with all the angels and every creature from the earth joining to worship the redeemer Jesus Christ. The worship ended in praising the Lamb of God and with the Father being seated on the throne. All of this praise began because the Lamb was able to take the scroll from the Father's right hand.]

## Revelation 6

After Christ is worshipped as being the only one worthy enough to break the seven seals, He breaks each individual seal. As each one is broken, a new demonstration of God's **judgment** is unleashed.

### First Seal: The Conqueror

**1 Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see." 2 And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.** [This begins the reign of the antichrist on earth. He is a great deceiver that will come as a peaceful but yet powerful leader. The bow with no arrows represents power and peace. The crown he wears is a laurel wreath that is awarded to athletes. This crown was given to him by the world's leaders.]

### Second Seal: Conflict on Earth

**3 When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come and see." 4 Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword** [the antichrist changes from man of peace to a man of war].

### Third Seal: Scarcity on Earth

**5 When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come and see." So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. 6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine."** [The color black refers to famine. The shortage of food is going to drive up the prices so that a day's wage can only feed one person per day, no longer will men and women be able to support themselves and their children. Everyone will have to earn a day's wage in order to eat.]

### Fourth Seal: Widespread Death on Earth

**7 When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see." 8 So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.** [The color pale in the Greek is used to describe the decomposition of a corpse, which is significant because this rider will bring death to 25% of the world's population. Take note that death is riding the pale horse and Hades is right behind. Death will claim the bodies while Hades will claim the souls. However, let us not forget about [Revelation 1:18](#) where it says Jesus holds the keys to death and Hades, so they are owned by Him.]

### Fifth Seal: The Cry of the Martyrs

**9 When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.** [The world wants nothing to do with Jesus, so they begin killing believers for their faith. Martyr means witness and these martyrs were probably murdered in the early part of the tribulation and their murderers were still on earth. These martyrs also represent all those who have laid down their lives for Christ. God makes it clear that their deaths were not an accident but an appointment and that others would join them. God is in control even in the death of His people.] **10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" 11 Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.**

### Sixth Seal: Cosmic Disturbances

**12 I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. 13 And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. 14 Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. 15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and**

every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, **16** and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! **17** For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" [This begins God's full fury of the Day of the Lord. The earthquake is one of three in which all of nature will be affected: the sun, moon, stars, heaven, mountains, and islands. Take note that the people try to run from God in fear rather than running to Him in faith. Do you see the irony of the mighty men trying to hide from the face of a lamb? For homework, read [Matthew 24:4-13](#) where Jesus is describing to the apostles the end times and compare it with [Revelation 6](#).]

## Revelation 7

### The Sealed of Israel

**1** After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. **2** Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, **3** saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads." **4** And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred *and* forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel *were* sealed [[Revelation 7:3](#) tells us that God is still in the business of saving souls. Even in the ends times, it will not be too late for some to receive **salvation**. The seal mentioned in [Revelation 7:3](#) refers to a signet ring that is used to press its image in wax melted on a document, and in this case, it is the name of the God. I happen to think that God does not use melted wax but instead uses the precious blood of Calvary that the slain Lamb bled out to wipe away our sins. These people are receiving the Lord's seal rather than the mark of the beast. The sealed Jews will receive the name of God as their seal. This seal will protect the 144,000 chosen Jews from the judgment that is going to hurt heaven and earth.]:

**5** of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand *were* sealed;  
of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand *were* sealed;  
of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand *were* sealed;  
**6** of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand *were* sealed;  
of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand *were* sealed;  
of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand *were* sealed;  
**7** of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand *were* sealed;  
of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand *were* sealed;  
of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand *were* sealed;  
**8** of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand *were* sealed;  
of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand *were* sealed;  
of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand *were* sealed.

### A Multitude from the Great Tribulation

**9** After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white

robes, with palm branches in their hands, **10** and crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation *belongs* to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!” **11** All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, **12** saying:

“Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom,  
Thanksgiving and honor and power and might,  
Be to our God forever and ever.

**Amen.”** [The multitudes are the **Gentiles** from all nations, peoples, and tongues. This is the culmination of **Mark 16:15b** (**Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature**). These people have been saved through faith in Christ during the tribulation period. The white robes and palm branches symbolize victory. They are the true overcomers. First, they were accepted (they stood before the throne and the lamb). Second, they were joyful (they sang praises). Third, they were rewarded.]

**13** Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, “Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?”

**14** And I said to him, “Sir, you know.”

So he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. [The chapter ends with some of the most awesome words you can find. There is a bible study method called personalization. **Revelation 7:15-17** are great verses to personalize. The personalization takes other people’s names/pronouns and replaces them with your name or a pronoun referencing you. Let me show you what I mean.] **15** Therefore they [your name] are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them [your name]. **16** They [your name] shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them [your name], nor any heat; **17** for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them [your name] and lead them [your name] to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their [your name] eyes.”

I do not know what some of us have been through, going through, or are about to go through. However, I do know this, that we may weep for our troubles today but one day Joy is going to come and what joy that will be! We will serve Him day and night in the temple and He will dwell with us. The Lamb will lead us and shepherd us to the fountains of life and God is going to wipe away every tear from our eyes.

### Apply (What is the point?)

There is a reason why the door is open. God does not want you to peek through the window to see what is going on—He desires our presence

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

Be homesick. Earth is our temporary residence. Heaven is our real home.

Resources used: **MacArthur’s Study Bible** and **Warren Wiersbe’s Be Victorious**

# The Revelation: Hallelujah!

---

## Preview

Jesus is coming soon. Morning or night or noon. Many will meet their doom. Trumpets will sound.

Key thought: The end of days is not exactly the end of days!

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Revelation 19-20 (Author = John)

### Revelation 19

#### Heaven Exults over Babylon (1-10)

**1 After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God!** [Alleluia or Hallelujah, meaning Praise the Lord, occurs 20 times in the Old Testament—all in **Psalms**. The only other times are in **Revelation 19**, where it occurs four times. It is regularly used in our culture, but not in the Bible. In the Bible it is a special word.] **2 For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her."** **3 Again they said, "Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!"** **4 And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!"** **5 Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear [reverence and obedience] Him, both small and great!"**

**6 And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude** [the sound in Vanderbilt Stadium as the Commodores beat the Volunteers], **as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!** **7 Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready** [the church]. **"8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.**

**9 Then he** [the angel] **said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'"** **And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."** **10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See that you do not do that!** [This verse reminds us to be careful in our worship. We should not pay homage to anyone or anything other than God.] **I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."**

Keith talked about the personalization method for Bible study—another method is visualization. Consider drawing the scene as a method of implementing visualization.

#### Christ on a White Horse (11-16)

**11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful** [faithful is confidence in what someone will do] **and True** [true is the doing of the thing you had

confidence in; Jesus is faithful to His church by delivering it from all its enemies and true to all the promises He has made], **and in righteousness He judges** [because His is the right side] **and makes war. 12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head** [the beast had seven heads with blasphemous names written on them and ten horns] **were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. 13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies** [angels ([Daniel 8:13](#)) and man ([Psalm 16; 34:9](#) and [Acts 9:13](#))] **in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. 15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword** [the Word of God (Bible)], **that with it He should strike** [He wins with His word] **the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress** [indicating total destruction] **of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written:**

#### **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.**

Throughout history, tattoos on the thigh, chest, and back were used among different nations to express character, conduct, qualities, and conquests. This tattoo showed Jesus' history of success—He is a hero!

#### **The Beast and His Armies Defeated (17-21)**

**17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, 18 that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great."**

**19 And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. 20 Then the beast was captured** [as soon as the battle started, it was over], **and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the rest** [those who took the mark—the unbelievers] **were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.**

## **Revelation 20**

#### **Satan Bound 1,000 Years (1-3)**

**1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years** [literally, figuratively, or prophetically?]; **3 and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished** [the earth will be free of Satan and his lies for a really long time]. **But after these things he must be released for a little while.** [Man still fails in his obedience]



### The Saints Reign with Christ 1,000 Years (4-6)

**4** And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded [martyred or murdered] for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived [ezesan, the same word used by Christ to describe His own resurrection] and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. **5** But the rest of the dead [the dead who did not believe] did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection. **6** Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

### Satanic Rebellion Crushed (7-10)

**7** Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison **8** and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number *is* as the sand of the sea [there will still be many who will not believe]. **9** They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. **10** The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet *are*. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

### The Great White Throne Judgment (11-15)

**11** Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. [All things are subject to His majesty, the mountains shook, and even the depth of the seas trembled in His presence] **12** And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. [Revelation 3:5: He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.] **13** The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. **14** Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire [Death dies here]. This is the second death. **15** And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. [We do not escape God' judgment—we satisfy it through Jesus Christ]

### Apply (What is the point?)

1. Jesus is coming soon
2. Jesus comes triumphantly
3. Jesus overcomes

### Personalize (What do I do with that?)

1. Get prepared, be prepared, and prepare others
2. Pray without ceasing and meditate on the Word
3. Get excited

## The Revelation: The New Jerusalem

## Preview: The End of the End and the Beginning of the Beginning

714 days ago, I stood before you and we began a 100-week journey. We spent the last 100 Sunday school classes going through an overview of the entire Bible. Welcome to the end of the end and the beginning of the beginning.

## The End of the End

Today is the last lesson in our last series. We spent five weeks on each of the following topics:

Old Testament	New Testament
In the Beginning (the creation of <b>all</b> things)	The Early Years of Jesus (how He came to us)
Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (the 'roots' story of the Bible)	The Teachings of Jesus (what He taught us)
The Story of Joseph (one man changing a nation's course)	The Miracles of Jesus (what He showed us)
Moses and the Exodus (leaving slavery and following God)	The Final Days of Jesus (how He <b>loved</b> us)
The Law and the Land (baby steps of a <b>nation</b> )	The Church is Born (baby steps of a kingdom)
The Judges (leadership without a king)	The Travels of the Apostle Paul (evangelism on <b>steroids</b> )
The Rise of Israel (kings and character flaws)	Letters to the Early Church (members with character flaws)
The Fall of Israel (character flaws and slavery . . . again)	Letters to the Early Church Leaders (leading and loving)
Psalms and Proverbs (beautiful wisdom literature)	The Apostles' Teaching (living and loving)
The Prophets (calling back to the Law)	The Revelation (the great revealing)

We saw 6,000 years of human history, the birth, wandering, and decline of a nation, and untold characters (named heroes and unnamed others). We spent 20 weeks studying the greatest Man who ever lived—Jesus Christ. We looked at how His followers grappled with His directions and spread His message. We studied letters, poems, and are finishing today with the last two chapters in the Bible.

This is the longest series I have ever heard of. As we saw failure after failure, I mentioned (more than a few times) that Jesus would fix it all one day. **Revelation 21-22** is that day.

## The Beginning of the Beginning

This is not just the end of the end; it is also the beginning of the beginning. God the Father promised in **Genesis 3** that a, '**woman's seed**,' would bruise Satan's head. Jesus promises in **Revelation 21:5** that He would, "**make all things new.**" In today's text, that is exactly what He does.

We serve a God who keeps His promises.

We serve a God who is exceedingly patient.

We serve a God who loves us beyond imagination.

We serve a God who is not deterred by evil men's plans.

We serve a God who loves evil men and evil women.

Lastly, we serve a God who will do what He said and will make all things new.

Key thought: God will fulfill **all** of His promises in His time and in His way

## Read & Explain (What does it mean?): Revelation 21-22 (Author = John)

### Revelation 21

#### All Things Made New

**1 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth** [BOOM! He just made all things new.], **for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away** [because this world is broken it cannot last, so do not hold on too tightly to the things that are here—they will not last either]. **Also there was no more sea.** **2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.** **3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God** [this is heaven: being with **God** (and conversely, hell is being away from God)]. **4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."**

Because He will make all things new . . .

there can be no death (no one will ever walk into a school and shoot children there)

there can be no sorrow (no one will ever miss anything there)

there can be no crying (God will personally wipe away all tears and remove the cause for all grief)

there will be no more pain (no one will ever hurt there)

However, the lack of tears, death, sorrow, crying, and pain is not what makes heaven heaven. What makes heaven heaven is the presence of God Himself.]

**5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new."** [Jesus is always making **new** things. He made the first heaven and the first earth. He breathed His Spirit into man to show us new truth. He creates new believers and makes them new creatures. He finishes by making a new heaven and a new earth. Our God loves new things. There will come a day when He no longer has to create new things—and **Revelation 21-22** is that day.] **And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."**

**6 And He said to me, "It is done!** [The plan that He formulated before time began is now complete. The greatest story of all—Jesus Christ's story—His story (history) is now complete. This, as Paul Harvey would say, is the rest of the story.] **I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. 7 He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. 8 But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."** [Hell is not hell because of the company, the burning, the fire, or the brimstone. Hell is hell because God is **not** there.]

### The New Jerusalem

**9 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. 12 Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: 13 three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west.**

**14 Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. 15 And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. 16 The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal.** [If you do the math (and I did), this city is a 1,500 mile cube. However—resistance is not futile there. You will want to participate in this.] **17 Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. 18 The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. 19 The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony [cal-SIN-oh-di], the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth sardonyx [sar-DON-x], the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl [burl], the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase [chris-SOP-row-sis], the eleventh jacinth [JAY-sinth], and the twelfth amethyst. 21 The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.**

### The Glory of the New Jerusalem

**22 But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple** [the Old Testament temple was never the point—the lamb was the point]. **23 The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it** [the sun and the moon (creation) was never the point—God's glory was the point]. **The Lamb is its light. 24 And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. 25 Its gates shall not be shut** [reminding me of [Revelation 4:1](#) where the door of heaven is open] **at all by day (there shall be no night there). 26 And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. 27 But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life** [Is your name written in that book?].

## Revelation 22

### The River of Life

**1** And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. **2** In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations [A study of trees is one of the most interesting studies in the entire Bible. God uses a tree to illustrate to Adam right and wrong. God uses the leaves of a tree to cover the nakedness of His creation. God uses a tree to hang His Son upon for the salvation of the world. Finally, God uses a tree for the healing of the nations.]. **3** And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. **4** They shall see His face [we will see Jesus—the One who died for us and the One who lives for us—our **hero** and **champion**], and His name shall be on their foreheads [so I hope you like prominent tattoos]. **5** There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.

### The Time Is Near

**6** Then he said to me, “These words are faithful and true.” And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place.

**7** “Behold, I am coming quickly [and I am glad]! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book [In case you wonder what there is to obey in **Revelation**, re-read **Revelation 2-3**—there is plenty there to keep you busy for years and years].”

**8** Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things [John has to be told several times in **Revelation** not to worship angels, but he is just overwhelmed at this point—and I have a hard time blaming him].

**9** Then he [the angel] said to me, “See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.” **10** And he said to me, “Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand [just like the door of heaven is open, the words of the book are open—they are available for you to read and to learn and to fall in love with Jesus]. **11** He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still.”

### Jesus Testifies to the Churches

**12** “And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. **13** I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.”

**14** Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. **15** But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.

**16** “I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.”

**17 And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely [the Gospel is for **EVERYONE**].**

### **A Warning**

**18 For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.**

### **I Am Coming Quickly**

**20 He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly."**

**Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!**

Challenge: Get prepared, be prepared, and prepare others because Jesus is coming back to make everything right

### **Apply (What is the point?)**

1. God keeps His word
2. This world (and everyone in it) is broken and needs **Jesus**
3. Jesus will fix it all one day

### **Personalize (What do I do with that?)**

1. Hear, read, study, memorize, meditate on, and apply God's word
2. Accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior
3. Look for His return

Now, before I tell you that our next Sunday school class is January 6, 2013, I need to thank some people:

My Lord and My God, the Redeemer of my soul, and my Savior, Jesus Christ

My beautiful bride, smoking hot wife, and constant encourager, Julie Fleming

My prayer warrior and prayer request distributor, Darla Skinner

My setup and takedown chief, Justin Harness

My sound crew, Bobby Jones, Daniel Goble, Joe McKay, and David Barber (they recorded 75%)

My fellow teachers, Terry Bolden, David Barber, Barry Cole, Tim Archer, Lori Drake, Amy Valovcin, Chandalee Chrisman, Terry Brown, Keith Chrisman, Justin Harness, and Doug Skinner. I found out that Mark Hamby taught his first Sunday school class last week at the Soddy Daisy campus (I have no words).

My class—all of you. Thank you for your encouragement, your support, and your attendance.

I will close this 100-week series with the last words of the Bible and last Sunday school blank of the year:

**21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.**