

# P52

**2017**

**WEEKLY BIBLE READING PROGRAM**



**PENTECOSTALS  
OF BILLINGS**

*where miracles still happen*

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## Foreword

P52 stands for Process 52- *a focus for every week of the year on daily bible reading and study*. Just as we see God's processes continuously at work throughout the Bible, this is the process we use to get into the Word of God and allow it to get into us. Jesus said in John 8:31 – "If you continue(abide) in my word, then are you my disciples indeed".

Look at this as your guide for "abiding" in God's Word and becoming a disciple of Jesus. Instead of trying to hurriedly read a set number of different chapters from the Bible every day, we encourage you to read the same chapter for a week with the rest of the church. Some chapters are from the Old Testament and some are from the New Testament. You will read the specified chapter every day for seven days. The attention is on the *quality* of your reading rather than the *quantity* or the number of chapters you can read in a year's time. Often the midweek bible study will reinforce your daily reading and study, and you will find that you understand more as you read the same chapter repeatedly. At the back of the book there is also an example and a template to help you apply the Word even more.

There is something powerful about staying in the Word of God on a consistent basis. It is not meant just to inform you, but to transform you. God never meant for Bible study to simply increase our knowledge. Reading, researching, remembering, and reflecting on the Bible is useless if we fail to put God's Word into practice. James says if we want our lives to be blessed by God we must become "doers of the word" (James 1:22-25).

Jesus says both knowing and applying the Word creates the foundation for our lives: "Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock" (Matthew 7:24 NIV). There is no doubt God can do things instantly and suddenly, but the growth of your spiritual maturity is not an instant and sudden act of God. God has never taken a short cut in the spiritual expansion of His followers. It takes time, effort, sweat, and PROCESS to become a fully devoted Christ-follower – a disciple.

Remember the main intent of this guide is to help you to become more like Jesus by getting you involved in the process of meeting with Him and His Word daily. As you commit yourself to spending time in God's Word and in His presence, you will begin to reflect Who He is and become a fully functioning disciple.

Let the process continue! Join us as we discover the wonderful things God has for us throughout the remainder of this year!

## APRIL 2-8 - It's Going to Blow Your Mind!

**“Nearly every spiritual dysfunction in our lives can be traced back to the fact that heaven does not really have a hold on us.” – Joe Stowell**

**Overview:** The book of Revelation, by its own title, is a book that reveals. Many consider this book to be a book of mystery, but that is far from the truth. John penned this writing while in exile on the island of Patmos. He received visions from the Lord and was instructed to write down everything he saw. Revelation 21 opens with a dramatic vision given to John of a new heaven and a new earth. John describes the future dwelling place of the saints in terms of a holy city. This chapter is packed full of promise and hope for the believer. We see the victory of “*He who sat on the throne*” (v. 5), the glory and honor of God in the heavens, and a vast description of the great city.

**Memory verse:** 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.*

### Revelation 21

<sup>1</sup>Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. <sup>2</sup>Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup>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. <sup>4</sup>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.”

<sup>5</sup>Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” And He said to me, “Write, for these words are true and faithful.”

<sup>6</sup>And He said to me, “It is done! 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. <sup>7</sup>He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. <sup>8</sup>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.”

<sup>9</sup>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.” <sup>10</sup>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, <sup>11</sup>having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. <sup>12</sup>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: <sup>13</sup> three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west.

<sup>14</sup> Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. <sup>15</sup> And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> Then he measured its wall: one hundred *and* forty-four cubits, *according* to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. <sup>18</sup> The construction of its wall was *of* jasper; and the city *was* pure gold, like clear glass. <sup>19</sup> 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, the fourth emerald, <sup>20</sup> the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. <sup>21</sup> 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.

<sup>22</sup> But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. <sup>23</sup> The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb *is* its light. <sup>24</sup> 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. <sup>25</sup> Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). <sup>26</sup> And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. <sup>27</sup> 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.

**Confession:** The Lord God is great and mighty! He is my Rock and my salvation. In Him I will lack nothing. He is complete. He is eternal. He is faithful. He is trustworthy. I will live for Him. I will trust Him. I will exalt Him all the days of my life. He is worthy of praise and I give Him my life.

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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## APRIL 9-15 - Could You Not Watch With Me One Hour?

**“His final prayer was about you. His final pain was for you.  
His final passion was you. For it was in the garden that he made his decision.  
He would rather go to hell for you than go to heaven without you.” – Max Lucado**

**Overview:** The end of Christ’s earthly ministry is now at hand, and everything happens fast. Leading up to the crucifixion in the next chapter, we find Jesus announcing his death for the final time. It is in chapter where we encounter extravagant worship, the details of the Passover meal, and the foretelling of the disciples’ desertion. The Garden of Gethsemane plea and prayer, the betrayal and flight of the disciples, and the illegal night meeting at the high priest’s palace are all mentioned before the chapter ends with the denial of Peter. This is a lengthy chapter, and bits and pieces as well as other details of the events leading up to Calvary are included in all the other gospels. The Scripture references listed before each division here in Matthew 26 will help you see the complete story clearly.

**Memory verse:** 41 – *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

### Matthew 26

*Mark 14:1, 2; Luke 22:1, 2*

Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, *that* He said to His disciples, <sup>2</sup>“You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.” <sup>3</sup>Then the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, <sup>4</sup>and plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill *Him*. <sup>5</sup>But they said, “Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people.”

*Mark 14:3–9; John 12:2–8*

<sup>6</sup>And when Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, <sup>7</sup>a woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured *it* on His head as He sat *at the table*. <sup>8</sup>But when His disciples saw *it*, they were indignant, saying, “Why this waste? <sup>9</sup>For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to *the poor*.”

<sup>10</sup>But when Jesus was aware of *it*, He said to them, “Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me. <sup>11</sup>For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always. <sup>12</sup>For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did *it* for My burial. <sup>13</sup>Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.”

*Mark 14:10, 11; Luke 22:3–6*

<sup>14</sup>Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests <sup>15</sup>and said, “What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?” And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. <sup>16</sup>So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.

*Mark 14:12–16; Luke 22:7–13*

<sup>17</sup> Now on the first *day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread* the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, “Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?”

<sup>18</sup> And He said, “Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, “My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.” ’ ”

<sup>19</sup> So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover.

*Mark 14:17–21; Luke 22:14, 21–23; John 13:21, 22*

<sup>20</sup> When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve. <sup>21</sup> Now as they were eating, He said, “Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.” <sup>22</sup> And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, “Lord, is it I?” <sup>23</sup> He answered and said, “He who dipped *his* hand with Me in the dish will betray Me. <sup>24</sup> The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.” <sup>25</sup> Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, “Rabbi, is it I?” He said to him, “You have said it.”

*Mark 14:22–25; Luke 22:19, 20; 1 Cor. 11:23–26*

<sup>26</sup> 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.”

<sup>27</sup> Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. <sup>28</sup> For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. <sup>29</sup> 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.”

*Mark 14:26–31; Luke 22:34, 39; John 13:37, 38*

<sup>30</sup> And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

<sup>31</sup> Then Jesus said to them, “All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: *‘I will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’*”

<sup>32</sup> But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.”

<sup>33</sup> Peter answered and said to Him, “Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble.” <sup>34</sup> Jesus said to him, “Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.” <sup>35</sup> Peter said to Him, “Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!” And so said all the disciples.

*Mark 14:32–42; Luke 22:40–46*

<sup>36</sup> Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, “Sit here while I go and pray over there.” <sup>37</sup> And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. <sup>38</sup> Then He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.”

<sup>39</sup> He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You *will*.”

<sup>40</sup> Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, “What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? <sup>41</sup> Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak.”

<sup>42</sup> Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.” <sup>43</sup> And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy.

<sup>44</sup> So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.  
<sup>45</sup> Then He came to His disciples and said to them, “Are *you* still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.  
<sup>46</sup> Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.”

*Mark 14:43–52; Luke 22:47–53; John 18:1–11*

<sup>47</sup> And while He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and elders of the people.

<sup>48</sup> Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him.” <sup>49</sup> Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed Him. <sup>50</sup> But Jesus said to him, “Friend, why have you come?” Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him. <sup>51</sup> And suddenly, one of those *who were* with Jesus stretched out *his* hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. <sup>52</sup> But Jesus said to him, “Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. <sup>53</sup> Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? <sup>54</sup> How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?” <sup>55</sup> In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, “Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me. <sup>56</sup> But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.

*Mark 14:53–65; Luke 22:54, 55, 63–65; John 18:12, 18, 24*

<sup>57</sup> And those who had laid hold of Jesus led *Him* away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. <sup>58</sup> But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest’s courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end.

<sup>59</sup> Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, <sup>60</sup> but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward <sup>61</sup> and said, “This *fellow* said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.’ ”

<sup>62</sup> And the high priest arose and said to Him, “Do You answer nothing? What *is it* these men testify against You?” <sup>63</sup> But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, “I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!”

<sup>64</sup> Jesus said to him, “*It is as you said*. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

<sup>65</sup> Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, “He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! <sup>66</sup> What do you think?” They answered and said, “He is deserving of death.”

<sup>67</sup> Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck *Him* with the palms of their hands, <sup>68</sup> saying, “Prophecy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?”

*Mark 14:66–72; Luke 22:55–62; John 18:15–18, 25–27*

<sup>69</sup> Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, “You also were with Jesus of Galilee.”

<sup>70</sup> But he denied it before *them* all, saying, “I do not know what you are saying.”

<sup>71</sup> And when he had gone out to the gateway, another *girl* saw him and said to those *who were* there, “This *fellow* also was with Jesus of Nazareth.”

<sup>72</sup> But again he denied with an oath, “I do not know the Man!”

<sup>73</sup> And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, “Surely you also are one of them, for your speech betrays you.”

<sup>74</sup> Then he began to curse and swear, *saying*, “I do not know the Man!” Immediately a rooster crowed. <sup>75</sup> And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.” So he went out and wept bitterly.

**Confession:** Thank you Jesus for giving your life for me. I will remember your blood which was shed for the remission of my sins. I desire for my worship to have a level of extravagance that was shown here as I express my feelings for all You have done for me. Let my constant prayer and worship come before You as a memorial of what You mean to me. Although this chapter ends with bitter tears, I am so grateful to realize that the story continued. Thank you for extending forgiveness to me just as you did Peter.

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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**APRIL 16-22 - He's Alive!**

***“The resurrection of Jesus changes the face of death for all His people.  
Death is no longer a prison, but a passage into God’s presence.  
Easter says you can put truth in a grave, but it won’t stay there.” -Clarence W. Hall***

**Overview:** It wasn't what they expected, but once again loss turned into gain. The tragedy was a triumph in disguise, and it all started to come back. Everything Jesus taught them finally started to make sense. It was not over, and He had not left them comfortless! The two travelers on the way to Emmaus soon learned what we all are learning – the longer we travel with Him the more it all makes sense. He brought peace, and He still speaks in the midst of terror and fright. The eyewitnesses would bear the initial responsibility of sharing the good news. They were to wait in Jerusalem until they were empowered by the Spirit of God when the Promise of the Father would come upon them.

**Memory verse:** 49 - *Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you;  
but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.*

## **Luke 24**

Now on the first *day* of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain *other women* with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. <sup>2</sup> But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. <sup>3</sup> Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. <sup>4</sup> And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. <sup>5</sup> Then, as they were afraid and bowed *their* faces to the earth, they said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? <sup>6</sup> He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, <sup>7</sup> saying, ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.’ ”

<sup>8</sup> And they remembered His words. <sup>9</sup> Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. <sup>10</sup> It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary *the mother* of James, and the other *women* with them, who told these things to the apostles. <sup>11</sup> And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them. <sup>12</sup> But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened.

<sup>13</sup> Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> And they talked together of all these things which had happened. <sup>15</sup> So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. <sup>16</sup> But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.

<sup>17</sup> And He said to them, “What kind of conversation *is* this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?”

<sup>18</sup> Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, “Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?”

<sup>19</sup> And He said to them, "What things?"

So they said to Him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, <sup>20</sup> and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. <sup>21</sup> But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. <sup>22</sup> Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. <sup>23</sup> When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. <sup>24</sup> And certain of those *who were* with us went to the tomb and found *it* just as the women had said; but Him they did not see."

<sup>25</sup> Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup> Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" <sup>27</sup> And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

<sup>28</sup> Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. <sup>29</sup> But they constrained Him, saying, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And He went in to stay with them.

<sup>30</sup> Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave it to them. <sup>31</sup> Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.

<sup>32</sup> And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?"

<sup>33</sup> So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those *who were* with them gathered together, <sup>34</sup> saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" <sup>35</sup> And they told about the things *that had happened* on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.

<sup>36</sup> Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you." <sup>37</sup> But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. <sup>38</sup> And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? <sup>39</sup> 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."

<sup>40</sup> When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. <sup>41</sup> But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, "Have you any food here?" <sup>42</sup> So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. <sup>43</sup> And He took *it* and ate in their presence.

<sup>44</sup> Then He said to them, "These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me." <sup>45</sup> And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

<sup>46</sup> Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, <sup>47</sup> and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup> And you are witnesses of these things.

<sup>49</sup> Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."

<sup>50</sup> And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them.  
<sup>51</sup> Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. <sup>52</sup> And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, <sup>53</sup> and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen.

**Confession:** I will seek you early, O God. When I do not find You in the places I look or at the times I expect, I will share what I know and keep on looking. May I look forward to finding you in every conversation I share and in every journey I take. I am thankful for that promised power from on high, and thankful for Your blessings!

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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## APRIL 23-29 - Offenses Will Come!

**Overview:** The chapter begins with Jesus exposing the danger of causing someone to stumble. Serious words are shared about leading astray a seemingly insignificant or vulnerable disciple. The apostles then request a faith increase, and Jesus reminds them that they were simply servants obeying His commands. A key passage concerning thanksgiving is contained in this chapter, as well as how things will be when Christ returns.

**Memory verse:** 33 – *Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.*

### Luke 17

Then He said to the disciples, “It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe *to him* through whom they do come! <sup>2</sup> It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. <sup>3</sup> Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. <sup>4</sup> And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, ‘I repent,’ you shall forgive him.”

<sup>5</sup> And the apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith.”

<sup>6</sup> So the Lord said, “If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you. <sup>7</sup> And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and sit down to eat’? <sup>8</sup> But will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink’? <sup>9</sup> Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. <sup>10</sup> So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.’”

<sup>11</sup> Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. <sup>12</sup> Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. <sup>13</sup> And they lifted up *their* voices and said, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!” <sup>14</sup> So when He saw *them*, He said to them, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. <sup>15</sup> And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, <sup>16</sup> and fell down on *his* face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan.

<sup>17</sup> So Jesus answered and said, “Were there not ten cleansed? But where *are* the nine? <sup>18</sup> Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?” <sup>19</sup> And He said to him, “Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.”

<sup>20</sup> Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; <sup>21</sup> nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.”

<sup>22</sup> Then He said to the disciples, “The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see *it*. <sup>23</sup> And they will say to you, ‘Look here!’ or ‘Look there!’ Do not go after *them* or follow *them*. <sup>24</sup> For as the lightning that flashes out of one *part* under heaven shines to the other *part* under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day. <sup>25</sup> But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. <sup>26</sup> And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: <sup>27</sup> They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. <sup>28</sup> Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; <sup>29</sup> but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed *them* all. <sup>30</sup> Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

<sup>31</sup> “In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods *are* in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. <sup>32</sup> Remember Lot’s wife. <sup>33</sup> Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. <sup>34</sup> I tell you, in that night there will be two *men* in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. <sup>35</sup> Two *women* will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. <sup>36</sup> Two *men* will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left.”

<sup>37</sup> And they answered and said to Him, “Where, Lord?”

So He said to them, “Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together.”

**Confession:** Lord, I ask for you to use my faith to do Your work and will. May I always be thankful, and grateful for Your touch in my life. I will remember Lot’s wife, and will look for Your return. I seek to lose my life in my quest to find You.

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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## APRIL 30- MAY 6 - What Will Be the Sign?

**“My study of prophecy convinces me that God intends knowledge of future events to help us “occupy” with a sense of urgency until the Lord returns.” -David Jeremiah**

**Overview:** Jesus tells about the future sitting in the very place where the prophet predicted the Messiah would stand when He came to establish His Kingdom (Zechariah 14:4). As He shared what to anticipate before His return, the warning is sounded repeatedly- watch out for deception and false teachers. When Jesus talked about the end times, He telescoped near future and far future events. Many of the events have already occurred, and more are yet to come. Jesus presented four instances of what “that day” will look like. The people before the flood (37-39), the men in the field (40), the women at the millstone (41), and the master of the house (43) are seen following the routine of life. Though some are depicted as living in a constant state of readiness, all are taken by surprise. Let’s not wait for the warning signs to get ready, let’s make readiness our routine!

**Memory verse:** 42 – *Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.*

### Matthew 24

Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. <sup>2</sup> And Jesus said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not *one* stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.” <sup>3</sup> Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”

<sup>4</sup> And Jesus answered and said to them: “Take heed that no one deceives you. <sup>5</sup> For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. <sup>6</sup> And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet. <sup>7</sup> For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. <sup>8</sup> All these *are* the beginning of sorrows.

<sup>9</sup> “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. <sup>10</sup> And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. <sup>11</sup> Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. <sup>12</sup> And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. <sup>13</sup> But he who endures to the end shall be saved. <sup>14</sup> And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

<sup>15</sup> “Therefore when you see the ‘*abomination of desolation*,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), <sup>16</sup> “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. <sup>17</sup> Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. <sup>18</sup> And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. <sup>19</sup> But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! <sup>20</sup> And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. <sup>21</sup> For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no,

nor ever shall be. <sup>22</sup> And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

<sup>23</sup> "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here *is* the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe *it*. <sup>24</sup> For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. <sup>25</sup> See, I have told you beforehand.

<sup>26</sup> "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, *He is* in the inner rooms!' do not believe *it*. <sup>27</sup> For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. <sup>28</sup> For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

<sup>29</sup> "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. <sup>30</sup> Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. <sup>31</sup> And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

<sup>32</sup> "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer *is* near. <sup>33</sup> So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! <sup>34</sup> Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. <sup>35</sup> Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

<sup>36</sup> "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. <sup>37</sup> But as the days of Noah *were*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. <sup>38</sup> For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, <sup>39</sup> and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. <sup>40</sup> Then two *men* will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. <sup>41</sup> Two *women will be* grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. <sup>42</sup> *Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.* <sup>43</sup> But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. <sup>44</sup> Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

<sup>45</sup> "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? <sup>46</sup> Blessed *is* that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. <sup>47</sup> Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. <sup>48</sup> But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' <sup>49</sup> and begins to beat *his* fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, <sup>50</sup> the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for *him* and at an hour that he is not aware of, <sup>51</sup> and will cut him in two and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

**Confession:** I will live in a state of readiness. I understand that if the day of my Lord's return doesn't dawn in my lifetime, then in death I will return to Him. I choose to live knowing that Christ's return or my departure could happen at any time. Watching, waiting.

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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## MAY 7-13 - God Will Turn It Around!

**“The entire life of Joseph stands as a memorial to God’s faithfulness. Our suffering is not meaningless, even if we never discover the meaning in this life.” -Robin Johnston**

**Overview:** Genesis begins with “In the beginning, God” and ends “in a coffin in Egypt.” It begins with God and ends with man. It begins with perfection and ends with corruption. It begins with the eternal and ends with the temporal; begins with life and ends with death. But in that coffin was the body of a man of faith who made his people promise they would carry his bones to the Promised Land, for “God will surely visit you.”

**Memory verse:** 20 – *But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.*

### Genesis 50

Then Joseph fell on his father’s face and wept over him, and kissed him. <sup>2</sup> And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father. So the physicians embalmed Israel. <sup>3</sup> Forty days were required for him, for such are the days required for those who are embalmed; and the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days.

<sup>4</sup> Now when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh, saying, “If now I have found favor in your eyes, please speak in the hearing of Pharaoh, saying, <sup>5</sup> ‘My father made me swear, saying, “Behold, I am dying; in my grave which I dug for myself in the land of Canaan, there you shall bury me.” Now therefore, please let me go up and bury my father, and I will come back.’ ”

<sup>6</sup> And Pharaoh said, “Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear.”

<sup>7</sup> So Joseph went up to bury his father; and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, <sup>8</sup> as well as all the house of Joseph, his brothers, and his father’s house. Only their little ones, their flocks, and their herds they left in the land of Goshen. <sup>9</sup> And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen, and it was a very great gathering.

<sup>10</sup> Then they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which *is* beyond the Jordan, and they mourned there with a great and very solemn lamentation. He observed seven days of mourning for his father. <sup>11</sup> And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, “This *is* a deep mourning of the Egyptians.” Therefore its name was called Abel Mizraim, which *is* beyond the Jordan.

<sup>12</sup> So his sons did for him just as he had commanded them. <sup>13</sup> For his sons carried him to the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite as property for a burial place. <sup>14</sup> And after he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers and all who went up with him to bury his father.

<sup>15</sup> When Joseph’s brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, “Perhaps Joseph will hate us, and may actually repay us for all the evil which we did to him.” <sup>16</sup> So they sent *messengers* to Joseph, saying, “Before your father died he commanded, saying, <sup>17</sup> ‘Thus you shall say to Joseph: “I beg you, please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their

sin; for they did evil to you.” ’ Now, please, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father.” And Joseph wept when they spoke to him.

<sup>18</sup> Then his brothers also went and fell down before his face, and they said, “Behold, we are your servants.”

<sup>19</sup> Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid, for *am* I in the place of God? <sup>20</sup> *But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.* <sup>21</sup> Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones.” And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

<sup>22</sup> So Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he and his father’s household. And Joseph lived one hundred and ten years. <sup>23</sup> Joseph saw Ephraim’s children to the third *generation*. The children of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were also brought up on Joseph’s knees.

<sup>24</sup> And Joseph said to his brethren, “I am dying; but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land to the land of which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.”

<sup>25</sup> Then Joseph took an oath from the children of Israel, saying, “God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here.” <sup>26</sup> So Joseph died, *being* one hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

**Confession:** My God is faithful, and He is working for my good! Others may wonder if they have been forgiven, but I will move forward with the assurance that my life in your hands and that my past is under your blood. I will forgive those who have trespassed against me, and I will choose to live as one who has been forgiven much.

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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## MAY 14-20 - The Ministry of Reconciliation

“Christian faith is basically about love and being loved and reconciliation. These things are so important, they’re foundational and can transform individuals, families.” -Philip Yancey

**Overview:** Paul contrasts our earthly bodies and our future resurrection bodies. He speaks of his desire to depart directly from his earthly body to his new incorruptible body and be at home with the Lord in heaven. But even if he died before Christ’s return, the gift of the Spirit guaranteed for him as it does for us the future rapture. We will have new bodies that will be perfect for our everlasting life. As part of the New Testament church, we will all stand before the judgement seat of Christ and will give account of our actions. This is not to be confused with the Great White Throne Judgement, which is for unbelievers. God’s summons to be reconciled requires a response from us, and we are His ambassadors.

**Memory verse:** 18 - *Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,*

## 2 Corinthians 5

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. <sup>2</sup>For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, <sup>3</sup>if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. <sup>4</sup>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. <sup>5</sup>Now He who has prepared us for this very thing *is* God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

<sup>6</sup>So *we are* always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. <sup>7</sup>For we walk by faith, not by sight. <sup>8</sup>We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

<sup>9</sup>Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. <sup>10</sup>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. <sup>11</sup>Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.

<sup>12</sup>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 and not in heart. <sup>13</sup>For if we are beside ourselves, *it is* for God; or if we are of sound mind, *it is* for you. <sup>14</sup>For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; <sup>15</sup>and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

<sup>16</sup>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. <sup>17</sup>Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. <sup>18</sup>Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, <sup>19</sup>that is, that God was in Christ

reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

<sup>20</sup> Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

**Confession:** I am a new creature in Christ. His love keeps me from judging, even as I take responsibility for my actions – knowing I will answer for my what I say and do. I no longer live for myself, but for the One who died for me. I have the ministry of reconciliation, and I am an ambassador for Christ.

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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## MAY 21-27 - The Right Time To Do the Right Thing

**“When written in Chinese, the word ‘crisis’ is composed of two characters. One represents danger and the other represents opportunity.” -John F. Kennedy**

**Overview:** David was mistreated by a man he highly respected. He kept trying to understand where he had gone wrong. What had he done to turn Saul’s heart against him, and how could he win it back? He proved his loyalty by sparing Saul’s life even though Saul aggressively pursued him. He tried to tell Saul that there was no evil or rebellion in his intentions. Even though David repeatedly showed his loyalty, Saul still desired to destroy him. But David refused to raise a hand against the one who sought to take his life, though God had put the army to sleep and had given him a companion who pleaded for permission to kill Saul. David somehow sensed that this sleeping army served another purpose—the testing of his very heart. God wanted to see whether David would kill to establish his kingdom, after the order of Saul, or allow God to establish his throne in righteousness forever. *Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath: for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord (Romans 12:19).*

**Memory verse:** 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.”*

### 1 Samuel 24

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.” <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> So he came to the sheepfolds by the road, where there was a cave; and Saul went in to attend to his needs. (David and his men were staying in the recesses of the cave.) <sup>4</sup> 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.’” And David arose and secretly cut off a corner of Saul’s robe. <sup>5</sup> Now it happened afterward that David’s heart troubled him because he had cut Saul’s *robe*. <sup>6</sup> 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.” <sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> And David said to Saul: “Why do you listen to the words of men who say, ‘Indeed David seeks your harm?’ <sup>10</sup> 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.’ <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> Let the LORD judge between you and me, and let the LORD avenge me on you. But my

hand shall not be against you. <sup>13</sup> As the proverb of the ancients says, 'Wickedness proceeds from the wicked.' But my hand shall not be against you. <sup>14</sup> After whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom do you pursue? A dead dog? A flea? <sup>15</sup> 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."

<sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> And now I know indeed that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand. <sup>21</sup> 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." <sup>22</sup> So David swore to Saul. And Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

**Confession:** I refuse to take matters into my own hands. It is always the right time to do the right thing, and I choose to take the high road. I will allow God to direct my steps and order my future, and I will not hijack His plan and purpose for my life. I will not avenge myself or allow anger to control me.

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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## **MAY 28 – JUNE 3 - This Is Still That!**

**“It is possible that we do injustice to the Pentecostal experience when we speak of the Day of Pentecost. For Pentecost was not limited to a day, a week, a month, or a year, but rather this is the Pentecostal Dispensation that will reign until Jesus comes.” -T.F. Tenney**

**Overview:** We begin with the 120 disciples waiting expectantly in an upper room somewhere in Jerusalem where Jesus in Luke 24:49 had commanded them to wait until they were endued with power. Or as He had told them in Acts 1:4 – to wait for the promise of the Father when they would be baptized with the Holy Ghost. When the Spirit came upon those gathered, the signs and noise caused a crowd to gather. Peter preached a message explaining how Joel’s prophecy was being fulfilled and how they had crucified their Lord. When they asked what could be done, Peter told them how they all could receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. The church began that day, and the last verses of this chapter give us insight into how the early church flourished.

**Memory verse:** *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.”*

## **Acts 2**

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. <sup>2</sup> And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them. <sup>4</sup> And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

<sup>5</sup> And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. <sup>6</sup> And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. <sup>7</sup> Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, “Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? <sup>8</sup> And how *is it that* we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? <sup>9</sup> Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, <sup>10</sup> Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, <sup>11</sup> Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.” <sup>12</sup> So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “Whatever could this mean?” <sup>13</sup> Others mocking said, “They are full of new wine.”

<sup>14</sup> But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. <sup>15</sup> For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is *only* the third hour of the day. <sup>16</sup> 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; 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.'*

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—<sup>23</sup> Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; <sup>24</sup> whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. <sup>25</sup> 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.'*

<sup>29</sup> "Men *and* brethren, let *me* speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. <sup>30</sup> 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, <sup>31</sup> he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. <sup>32</sup> This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. <sup>33</sup> 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.

<sup>34</sup> "For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself:

*'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand,  
<sup>35</sup> Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."'*

<sup>36</sup> "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

<sup>37</sup> Now when they heard *this*, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?"

<sup>38</sup> 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.

<sup>39</sup> 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."



<sup>40</sup> And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." <sup>41</sup> Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*. <sup>42</sup> And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. <sup>43</sup> Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. <sup>44</sup> Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, <sup>45</sup> and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

<sup>46</sup> So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

**Confession:** Thank you Lord for allowing me to be filled with Your Spirit! I accept the gift, the power, and the responsibility of being filled with the Holy Ghost! I will share this experience that I know is for everyone. I rejoice in the new beginning that started at Pentecost, and I desire to see your promises fulfilled as I pattern my life after You.

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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**JUNE 4-10** - Choose You This Day!

**“Idolatry is huge in the Bible, dominant in our personal lives, and irrelevant in our mistaken estimations.” - Os Guinness**

**Overview:** At the place where Abraham first received God’s promise to possess the land, Joshua reflects on the promise’s fulfillment by renewing the covenant and building a memorial. He throws down a challenge and tells the people they can follow the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or they can choose a different god. The other three choices are: to follow the **old** gods from beyond the river, from the place where they started; to follow the gods they met **next**, where they were enslaved; or to follow the **local** gods, those of the people recently defeated by the one true God. Notice that each category has a corresponding time and a place of life. As we see ourselves in this text, remember that the gods that compete for our attention come at us based on these same categories.

**Memory verse:** 15 - *And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”*

## **Joshua 24**

Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem and called for the elders of Israel, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers; and they presented themselves before God. <sup>2</sup> And Joshua said to all the people, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel: ‘Your fathers, *including* Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, dwelt on the other side of the River in old times; and they served other gods. <sup>3</sup> Then I took your father Abraham from the other side of the River, led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac. <sup>4</sup> To Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. To Esau I gave the mountains of Seir to possess, but Jacob and his children went down to Egypt. <sup>5</sup> Also I sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt, according to what I did among them. Afterward I brought you out.

<sup>6</sup> ‘Then I brought your fathers out of Egypt, and you came to the sea; and the Egyptians pursued your fathers with chariots and horsemen to the Red Sea. <sup>7</sup> So they cried out to the LORD; and He put darkness between you and the Egyptians, brought the sea upon them, and covered them. And your eyes saw what I did in Egypt. Then you dwelt in the wilderness a long time.

<sup>8</sup> And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, who dwelt on the other side of the Jordan, and they fought with you. But I gave them into your hand, that you might possess their land, and I destroyed them from before you.

<sup>9</sup> Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose to make war against Israel, and sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you. <sup>10</sup> But I would not listen to Balaam; therefore he continued to bless you. So I delivered you out of his hand.

<sup>11</sup> Then you went over the Jordan and came to Jericho. And the men of Jericho fought against you—*also* the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. But I delivered them into your hand. <sup>12</sup> I sent

the hornet before you which drove them out from before you, *also* the two kings of the Amorites, *but* not with your sword or with your bow. <sup>13</sup> I have given you a land for which you did not labor, and cities which you did not build, and you dwell in them; you eat of the vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant.'

<sup>14</sup> "Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD! <sup>15</sup> *And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.*"

<sup>16</sup> So the people answered and said: "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; <sup>17</sup> for the LORD our God *is* He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, who did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way that we went and among all the people through whom we passed. <sup>18</sup> And the LORD drove out from before us all the people, including the Amorites who dwelt in the land. We also will serve the LORD, for He *is* our God."

<sup>19</sup> But Joshua said to the people, "You cannot serve the LORD, for He *is* a holy God. He *is* a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. <sup>20</sup> If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you, after He has done you good."

<sup>21</sup> And the people said to Joshua, "No, but we will serve the LORD!"

<sup>22</sup> So Joshua said to the people, "You *are* witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the LORD for yourselves, to serve Him." And they said, "We *are* witnesses!"

<sup>23</sup> "Now therefore," *he said*, "put away the foreign gods which *are* among you, and incline your heart to the LORD God of Israel." <sup>24</sup> And the people said to Joshua, "The LORD our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey!"

<sup>25</sup> So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made for them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem.

<sup>26</sup> Then Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God. And he took a large stone, and set it up there under the oak that *was* by the sanctuary of the LORD. <sup>27</sup> And Joshua said to all the people, "Behold, this stone shall be a witness to us, for it has heard all the words of the LORD which He spoke to us. It shall therefore be a witness to you, lest you deny your God." <sup>28</sup> So Joshua let the people depart, each to his own inheritance.

<sup>29</sup> Now it came to pass after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, *being* one hundred and ten years old. <sup>30</sup> And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Serah, which *is* in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash.

<sup>31</sup> Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had known all the works of the LORD which He had done for Israel.

<sup>32</sup> The bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel had brought up out of Egypt, they buried at Shechem, in the plot of ground which Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for one hundred pieces of silver, and which had become an inheritance of the children of Joseph.

<sup>33</sup> And Eleazar the son of Aaron died. They buried him in a hill *belonging to* Phinehas his son, which was given to him in the mountains of Ephraim.

**Confession:** My heart is a battlefield, and You, O God, are my commander! I will win the war against false gods that compete for the place of glory and control in my life as I pursue God. I am wired for worship, and I will daily choose to worship my Savior and Lord!

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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**JUNE 11-17** - Choose You This Day!

**“Idols are defeated not by being removed but by being replaced.”** - Kyle Idleman

**Overview:** Jeremiah’s 40-year ministry spanned the final days of Judah’s existence as an independent nation. He constantly warned his nation to submit to Babylon, a nation which God had appointed to discipline His people. As a result, he was hated as a traitor to his people and his life was often threatened. Yet Jeremiah lived to see his words come true. He was often called the weeping prophet because of the personal anguish he knew in his ministry. In his direct manner, he likened his people’s actions as worshiping the worthless. The chapter opens with a warning against being led astray by the pagan gods who are as helpless as a piece of wood cut from a tree in the forest. None of these gods, who are powerless to speak or act, can compare with the LORD who is the living God and the eternal King. As the chapter continues, Jeremiah once again falls into deep depression as he contemplates the coming judgment. He pleaded with God to be merciful to his people, and to reserve His most severe judgment for those who had persecuted them.

**Memory verse:** 23 - *O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.*

## **Jeremiah 10**

Hear the word which the LORD speaks to you, O house of Israel. <sup>2</sup> Thus says the LORD: “Do not learn the way of the Gentiles; Do not be dismayed at the signs of heaven, for the Gentiles are dismayed at them.

<sup>3</sup> For the customs of the peoples *are* futile; for *one* cuts a tree from the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the ax.

<sup>4</sup> They decorate it with silver and gold; they fasten it with nails and hammers so that it will not topple.

<sup>5</sup> They *are* upright, like a palm tree, and they cannot speak; They must be carried, because they cannot go *by themselves*. Do not be afraid of them, for they cannot do evil, nor can they do any good.”

<sup>6</sup> Inasmuch as *there is* none like You, O LORD (You *are* great, and Your name *is* great in might),

<sup>7</sup> Who would not fear You, O King of the nations? For this is Your rightful due. For among all the wise *men* of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, *there is* none like You.

<sup>8</sup> But they are altogether dull-hearted and foolish; a wooden idol *is* a worthless doctrine.

<sup>9</sup> Silver is beaten into plates; it is brought from Tarshish, and gold from Uphaz, The work of the craftsman and of the hands of the metalsmith; blue and purple *are* their clothing; they *are* all the work of skillful *men*.

<sup>10</sup> But the LORD *is* the true God; He *is* the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth will tremble, and the nations will not be able to endure His indignation.

11 Thus you shall say to them: “The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from under these heavens.”

12 He has made the earth by His power, He has established the world by His wisdom, And has stretched out the heavens at His discretion.

13 When He utters His voice, *there is* a multitude of waters in the heavens: “And He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth. He makes lightning for the rain, He brings the wind out of His treasures.”

14 Everyone is dull-hearted, without knowledge; every metalsmith is put to shame by an image; for his molded image *is* falsehood, and *there is* no breath in them.

15 They *are* futile, a work of errors; in the time of their punishment they shall perish.

16 The Portion of Jacob *is* not like them, for He *is* the Maker of all *things*, And Israel *is* the tribe of His inheritance; the LORD of hosts *is* His name.

17 Gather up your wares from the land, O inhabitant of the fortress!

18 For thus says the LORD: “Behold, I will throw out at this time the inhabitants of the land, and will distress them, that they may find *it so*.”

19 Woe is me for my hurt! My wound is severe. But I say, “Truly this *is* an infirmity, And I must bear it.”

20 My tent is plundered, and all my cords are broken; my children have gone from me, and they *are* no more. *There is* no one to pitch my tent anymore, or set up my curtains.

21 For the shepherds have become dull-hearted, and have not sought the LORD; Therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered.

22 Behold, the noise of the report has come, and a great commotion out of the north country, to make the cities of Judah desolate, a den of jackals.

23 O LORD, I know the way of man *is* not in himself; *it is* not in man who walks to direct his own steps.

24 O LORD, correct me, but with justice; not in Your anger, lest You bring me to nothing.

25 Pour out Your fury on the Gentiles, who do not know You, and on the families who do not call on Your name; for they have eaten up Jacob, devoured him and consumed him, and made his dwelling place desolate.

**Confession:** I declare that I know the One True God and I have experienced His power in my life. Thank you, Jesus for the discernment to recognize who you are as I call out to you by the authority of your Name. My actions will show that I am know that my God is alive.

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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## JUNE 18-24 – How Long Will You Falter?

“Idolatry is seeking security and meaning in someone or something other than God.”  
- A.R. Bernard

**Overview:** This chapter would be in a list of the greatest chapters in the Bible. Here we find Obadiah, Ahab, and the prophets of Baal. Elijah engages the enemy on his turf and challenges the people to turn to God. God answers Elijah’s prayer by fire and consumes what has been offered as a water soaked sacrifice; rain falls in Israel. James 5:17-18 gives further insight to the prayer that results from faith and the pattern for our praying. It is God’s will for the rain to come and the drought to end; it’s time to pray again!

**Memory verse:** 21 - *And Elijah came to all the people, and said, “How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.” But the people answered him not a word.*

### 1 Kings 18

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.”

<sup>2</sup> So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab; and *there was* a severe famine in Samaria. <sup>3</sup> And Ahab had called Obadiah, who *was* in charge of *his* house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly. <sup>4</sup> 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.) <sup>5</sup> 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.” <sup>6</sup> So they divided the land between them to explore it; Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.

<sup>7</sup> 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?”

<sup>8</sup> And he answered him, “*It is* I. Go, tell your master, ‘Elijah *is here*.’ ”

<sup>9</sup> So he said, “How have I sinned, that you are delivering your servant into the hand of Ahab, to kill me? <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> And now you say, ‘Go, tell your master, “Elijah *is here*” ’! <sup>12</sup> 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; 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. <sup>13</sup> 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? <sup>14</sup> And now you say, ‘Go, tell your master, “Elijah *is here*.” ’ He will kill me!”

<sup>15</sup> Then Elijah said, “As the LORD of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will surely present myself to him today.”

<sup>16</sup> So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him; and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

<sup>17</sup> Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, “*Is that* you, O troubler of Israel?”

<sup>18</sup> And he 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. <sup>19</sup> 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, who eat at Jezebel's table."

<sup>20</sup> So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel. <sup>21</sup> *And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him."* But the people answered him not a word. <sup>22</sup> Then Elijah said to the people, "I alone am left a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets *are* four hundred and fifty men. <sup>23</sup> 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*. <sup>24</sup> 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."

<sup>25</sup> 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*."

<sup>26</sup> 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.

<sup>27</sup> 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." <sup>28</sup> So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them. <sup>29</sup> 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.

<sup>30</sup> 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. <sup>31</sup> 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." <sup>32</sup> Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD; and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two seahs of seed. <sup>33</sup> And he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid *it* on the wood, and said, "Fill four waterpots with water, and pour *it* on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood." <sup>34</sup> 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. <sup>35</sup> So the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water.

<sup>36</sup> 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. <sup>37</sup> 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."

<sup>38</sup> 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. <sup>39</sup> 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!"

<sup>40</sup> 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.



<sup>41</sup> Then Elijah said to Ahab, “Go up, eat and drink; for *there is* the sound of abundance of rain.” <sup>42</sup> 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, <sup>43</sup> 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.”

<sup>44</sup> 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.’ ”

<sup>45</sup> Now it happened in the meantime that the sky became black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy rain. So Ahab rode away and went to Jezreel. <sup>46</sup> 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.

**Confession:** I choose You, Jesus! I have seen enough prayers answered and I have felt Your presence on enough occasions that I don’t have to be reminded of Your power. I will believe that You are greater than any false god or force that comes against me.

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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## JUNE 25- JULY 1 – One Thing Lacking

**“We are often drawn to the gods of success  
because they allow us to sit on the throne of our own lives.” - Kyle Idleman**

**Overview:** \*Persistence prevails. Here we find how a widow persuaded a wicked judge to deal with her adversaries. If a wicked earthly judge could be so moved, said Jesus, how much more will our benevolent heavenly Father respond to our persistent prayers.

\*While an arrogant Pharisee compared himself favorably to others, a tax collector admitted his spiritual poverty and sought mercy. Jesus declared the tax collector more righteous than the Pharisee.

\*Jesus shows His love for children, and explains why the faith of children is the model for all who would come to God. \*Then we meet a rich man who made a poor choice.

\*For the third time, Jesus spoke clearly of his coming death and resurrection, yet the disciples still did not understand. \*When a blind man called out in faith, Jesus healed him, and he became a disciple.

**Memory verse:** 24 - And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!”

### Luke 18

Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, <sup>2</sup> saying: “There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. <sup>3</sup> Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, ‘Get justice for me from my adversary.’ <sup>4</sup> And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, ‘Though I do not fear God nor regard man, <sup>5</sup> yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.’ ”

<sup>6</sup> Then the Lord said, “Hear what the unjust judge said. <sup>7</sup> And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? <sup>8</sup> I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?”

<sup>9</sup> Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: <sup>10</sup> “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. <sup>11</sup> The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. <sup>12</sup> I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’ <sup>13</sup> And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise *his* eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ <sup>14</sup> I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

<sup>15</sup> Then they also brought infants to Him that He might touch them; but when the disciples saw *it*, they rebuked them. <sup>16</sup> But Jesus called them to *Him* and said, “Let the little children

come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. <sup>17</sup> Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.”

<sup>18</sup> Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

<sup>19</sup> So Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good but One, *that is*, God. <sup>20</sup> You know the commandments: ‘*Do not commit adultery,*’ ‘*Do not murder,*’ ‘*Do not steal,*’ ‘*Do not bear false witness,*’ ‘Honor your father and your mother.’ ”

<sup>21</sup> And he said, “All these things I have kept from my youth.”

<sup>22</sup> So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, “You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”

<sup>23</sup> But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich.

<sup>24</sup> And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! <sup>25</sup> For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

<sup>26</sup> And those who heard it said, “Who then can be saved?”

<sup>27</sup> But He said, “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.”

<sup>28</sup> Then Peter said, “See, we have left all and followed You.”

<sup>29</sup> So He said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, <sup>30</sup> who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life.”

<sup>31</sup> Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished. <sup>32</sup> For He will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon. <sup>33</sup> They will scourge *Him* and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again.”

<sup>34</sup> But they understood none of these things; this saying was hidden from them, and they did not know the things which were spoken.

<sup>35</sup> Then it happened, as He was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging. <sup>36</sup> And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. <sup>37</sup> So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. <sup>38</sup> And he cried out, saying, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

<sup>39</sup> Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

<sup>40</sup> So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him, <sup>41</sup> saying, “What do you want Me to do for you?”

He said, “Lord, that I may receive my sight.”

<sup>42</sup> Then Jesus said to him, “Receive your sight; your faith has made you well.” <sup>43</sup> And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw *it*, gave praise to God.

**Confession:** *I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold  
I'd rather be his than have riches untold  
I'd rather have Jesus than houses or land  
Yes, I'd rather be led by his nail pierced hands  
Than to be the king of a best domain and beheld in sin's dread sway  
**I'd rather have Jesus than anything this world affords today!***

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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## JULY 2-8 – In Love with Love

**“God has ordered our lives in such a way that he is to be our most significant relationship. When we get that right then our relationship with our spouse, our children, our parents, our friends – begin to line up.” - Kyle Idleman**

**Overview:** Jacob worked for Laban seven years to marry Rachel, but Laban gave him Leah and made him work seven more for Rachel. Every time Leah had a son, she thought it would make her husband love her. She finally stopped looking to her husband for those things that only God can give and she turned to God and said, "This time I will praise the Lord," Leah is rejected by her father and by her husband, but then she finally stops expecting them to meet her needs and she turns to God.

**Memory verse:** 35 - *And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, “Now I will praise the LORD.” Therefore she called his name Judah. Then she stopped bearing.*

## Genesis 29

So Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the East. <sup>2</sup> And he looked, and saw a well in the field; and behold, there *were* three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks. A large stone *was* on the well’s mouth. <sup>3</sup> Now all the flocks would be gathered there; and they would roll the stone from the well’s mouth, water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the well’s mouth.

<sup>4</sup> And Jacob said to them, “My brethren, where *are* you from?”

And they said, “We *are* from Haran.”

<sup>5</sup> Then he said to them, “Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?”

And they said, “We know him.”

<sup>6</sup> So he said to them, “Is he well?”

And they said, “*He is* well. And look, his daughter Rachel is coming with the sheep.”

<sup>7</sup> Then he said, “Look, *it is* still high day; *it is* not time for the cattle to be gathered together. Water the sheep, and go and feed *them*.”

<sup>8</sup> But they said, “We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together, and they have rolled the stone from the well’s mouth; then we water the sheep.”

<sup>9</sup> Now while he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father’s sheep, for she was a shepherdess. <sup>10</sup> And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother’s brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother’s brother, that Jacob went near and rolled the stone from the well’s mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother’s brother. <sup>11</sup> Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice and wept. <sup>12</sup> And Jacob told Rachel that he *was* her father’s relative and that he *was* Rebekah’s son. So she ran and told her father.

<sup>13</sup> Then it came to pass, when Laban heard the report about Jacob his sister’s son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him, and brought him to his house. So he told Laban all these things. <sup>14</sup> And Laban said to him, “Surely you *are* my bone and my flesh.” And he stayed with him for a month.

<sup>15</sup> Then Laban said to Jacob, “Because you *are* my relative, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what *should* your wages *be*?” <sup>16</sup> Now Laban had two daughters:

the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. <sup>17</sup> Leah's eyes were delicate, but Rachel was beautiful of form and appearance.

<sup>18</sup> Now Jacob loved Rachel; so he said, "I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter."

<sup>19</sup> And Laban said, "*It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to another man. Stay with me.*" <sup>20</sup> So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed *only* a few days to him because of the love he had for her.

<sup>21</sup> Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give *me* my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in to her." <sup>22</sup> And Laban gathered together all the men of the place and made a feast. <sup>23</sup> Now it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter and brought her to Jacob; and he went in to her. <sup>24</sup> And Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah as a maid. <sup>25</sup> So it came to pass in the morning, that behold, it was Leah. And he said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served you? Why then have you deceived me?"

<sup>26</sup> And Laban said, "It must not be done so in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. <sup>27</sup> Fulfill her week, and we will give you this one also for the service which you will serve with me still another seven years."

<sup>28</sup> Then Jacob did so and fulfilled her week. So he gave him his daughter Rachel as wife also. <sup>29</sup> And Laban gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as a maid. <sup>30</sup> Then *Jacob* also went in to Rachel, and he also loved Rachel more than Leah. And he served with Laban still another seven years.

<sup>31</sup> When the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, He opened her womb; but Rachel was barren. <sup>32</sup> So Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben; for she said, "The LORD has surely looked on my affliction. Now therefore, my husband will love me." <sup>33</sup> Then she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Because the LORD has heard that I *am* unloved, He has therefore given me this *son* also." And she called his name Simeon. <sup>34</sup> She conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now this time my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." Therefore his name was called Levi. <sup>35</sup> And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now I will praise the LORD." Therefore she called his name Judah. Then she stopped bearing.

**Confession:** I choose God above every other relationship. I will not allow my love for the people He has brought into my life to take His place. I expect my horizontal connections to thrive as I invest first in my vertical connection with Jesus.

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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## JULY 9-15 – Look Up and Change

**“A proud man is always looking down on things and people; and of course, as long as you’re looking down, you can’t see something that’s above you.” – C.S. Lewis**

**Overview:** Daniel chapter 4 is one of the most unique chapters in the entire Bible. It’s written by King Nebuchadnezzar, a man whose power and cruelty had no equal. So it’s surprising that he would write a chapter of the Bible, but what he writes is shocking. How did this happen? There is a literary device that has become fairly popular these days known as “reverse chronology.” You’ve no doubt seen or read stories that use reverse chronology. This is when the story begins by revealing some extraordinary or shocking ending and then goes back and shows you what led to such a conclusion. When you see the beginning scene, it seems so outrageous, so unbelievable that you ask yourself, “How could this have happened?” But as the story unfolds it all starts to make sense. This chapter is written using “reverse chronology.” We see this incredible change that has taken place in Nebuchadnezzar’s life. He goes from being the ultimate self-worshiper to worshiping the one true God.

**Memory verse:** *34 - And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever: For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom is from generation to generation.*

### Daniel 4

Nebuchadnezzar the king, To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you. <sup>2</sup>I thought it good to declare the signs and wonders that the Most High God has worked for me. <sup>3</sup>How great *are* His signs, and how mighty His wonders! His kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion *is* from generation to generation.

<sup>4</sup>I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in my house, and flourishing in my palace. <sup>5</sup>I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts on my bed and the visions of my head troubled me. <sup>6</sup>Therefore I issued a decree to bring in all the wise *men* of Babylon before me, that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. <sup>7</sup>Then the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers came in, and I told them the dream; but they did not make known to me its interpretation. <sup>8</sup>But at last Daniel came before me (his name *is* Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god; in him *is* the Spirit of the Holy God), and I told the dream before him, *saying:* <sup>9</sup>“Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the Spirit of the Holy God *is* in you, and no secret troubles you, explain to me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and its interpretation.

<sup>10</sup>These *were* the visions of my head *while* on my bed: I was looking, and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great.

<sup>11</sup>The tree grew and became strong; its height reached to the heavens, and it could be seen to the ends of all the earth.

<sup>12</sup>Its leaves *were* lovely, its fruit abundant, and in it *was* food for all.

The beasts of the field found shade under it, the birds of the heavens dwelt in its branches, and all flesh was fed from it.

<sup>13</sup> “I saw in the visions of my head *while* on my bed, and there was a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven. <sup>14</sup> He cried aloud and said thus: ‘Chop down the tree and cut off its branches, strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit.

Let the beasts get out from under it, and the birds from its branches.

<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless leave the stump and roots in the earth, *bound* with a band of iron and bronze, in the tender grass of the field. Let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and *let* him graze with the beasts on the grass of the earth.

<sup>16</sup> Let his heart be changed from *that of* a man, let him be given the heart of a beast, and let seven times pass over him.

<sup>17</sup> ‘This decision *is* by the decree of the watchers, and the sentence by the word of the holy ones, in order that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whomever He will, and sets over it the lowest of men.’

<sup>18</sup> “This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now you, Belteshazzar, declare its interpretation, since all the wise *men* of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the interpretation; but you *are* able, for the Spirit of the Holy God *is* in you.”

<sup>19</sup> Then Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, was astonished for a time, and his thoughts troubled him. So the king spoke, and said, “Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its interpretation trouble you.” Belteshazzar answered and said, “My lord, *may* the dream concern those who hate you, and its interpretation concern your enemies!

<sup>20</sup> “The tree that you saw, which grew and became strong, whose height reached to the heavens and which *could be seen* by all the earth, <sup>21</sup> whose leaves *were* lovely and its fruit abundant, in which *was* food for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and in whose branches the birds of the heaven had their home—<sup>22</sup> *it is* you, O king, who have grown and become strong; for your greatness has grown and reaches to the heavens, and your dominion to the end of the earth.

<sup>23</sup> “And inasmuch as the king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, ‘Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave its stump and roots in the earth, *bound* with a band of iron and bronze in the tender grass of the field; let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let him graze with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him’; <sup>24</sup> this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king: <sup>25</sup> They shall drive you from men, your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make you eat grass like oxen. They shall wet you with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over you, till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.

<sup>26</sup> “And inasmuch as they gave the command to leave the stump *and* roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be assured to you, after you come to know that Heaven rules. <sup>27</sup> Therefore, O king, let my advice be acceptable to you; break off your sins by *being* righteous, and your iniquities by showing mercy to *the* poor. Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity.”



<sup>28</sup>All *this* came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. <sup>29</sup> At the end of the twelve months he was walking about the royal palace of Babylon. <sup>30</sup> The king spoke, saying, “Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?”

<sup>31</sup>While the word *was still* in the king’s mouth, a voice fell from heaven: “King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you! <sup>32</sup> And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling *shall be* with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.”

<sup>33</sup>That very hour the word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar; he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles’ *feathers* and his nails like birds’ *claws*.

<sup>34</sup>And at the end of the time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever: For His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom *is* from generation to generation.

<sup>35</sup>All the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven and *among* the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand or say to Him, “What have You done?”

<sup>36</sup>At the same time my reason returned to me, and for the glory of my kingdom, my honor and splendor returned to me. My counselors and nobles resorted to me, I was restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added to me. <sup>37</sup> Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all of whose works *are* truth, and His ways justice. And those who walk in pride He is able to put down.

**Confession:** Lord, Your Word says that you hate a proud look, that You resist the proud but give grace to the humble. I submit myself, therefore, to You, God. In the name of Jesus, I resist the devil, and he will flee from me. I renounce every manifestation of pride in my life as sin; I repent and turn from it.

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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**JULY 16-22** – All Things Work for Good

***“God isn’t at work producing the circumstances I want.***

***God is at work in bad circumstances to produce the ME He wants.”*** – John Ortberg

**Overview:** This chapter shows us how to live by the Spirit and let peace rule in our hearts. Those who are “in” Christ Jesus – in other words, who believe in Him, live in Him, and have Him abiding in them – are mercifully under no condemnation. No one can condemn that person for sins of the past. No matter how severe the circumstances, we are still more than conquerors through Christ. We have more than enough power in the Spirit to defeat all enemies.

**Memory verse:** *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.*

## **Romans 8**

*There is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. <sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. <sup>3</sup> For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. <sup>7</sup> Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. <sup>8</sup> So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

<sup>9</sup> But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. <sup>10</sup> And if Christ *is* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin, but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup> But if the Spirit of Him 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.

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. <sup>15</sup> 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.” <sup>16</sup> The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. <sup>20</sup> For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected *it* in hope; <sup>21</sup> because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. <sup>22</sup> For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together

until now. <sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> 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? <sup>25</sup> But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for *it* with perseverance.

<sup>26</sup> 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 which cannot be uttered. <sup>27</sup> 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*.

<sup>28</sup> 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. <sup>29</sup> 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. <sup>30</sup> Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

<sup>31</sup> What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us? <sup>32</sup> 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? <sup>33</sup> Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? *It is* God who justifies. <sup>34</sup> 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. <sup>35</sup> Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? <sup>36</sup> As it is written:

*“For Your sake we are killed all day long;  
We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.”*

<sup>37</sup> Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, <sup>39</sup> nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Confession:** On the authority of the Word, I declare that I am more than a conqueror and am gaining an overwhelming victory through the name of Jesus. My God is more than enough! I am strong in the Lord and the power of His might, and He is working all things for my good.

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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## JULY 23-29 – No Loss Is Pointless

**“When the Gardener prunes us, we should not perceive it solely as a loss, but we ought to recognize there will be a gain coming from it.” – Ken Gurley**

**Overview:** What first may appear as pointless chronology in Joseph’s life is a closeup of the effect of loss. Jacob heard the voice of God saying to be fruitful and multiply, but for Joseph there was only loss. The death of a woman close to him was followed by the death of his mother as she gave birth. The chapter ends with his father dying.

As we continue to focus on “The Point of Low Points”, we will see God’s hand at work!

**Memory verse:** *10 - And God said to him, “Your name is Jacob; your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be your name.” So He called his name Israel.*

### Genesis 35

Then God said to Jacob, “Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there; and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother.”

<sup>2</sup> And Jacob said to his household and to all who *were* with him, “Put away the foreign gods that *are* among you, purify yourselves, and change your garments. <sup>3</sup> Then let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make an altar there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me in the way which I have gone.” <sup>4</sup> So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods which *were* in their hands, and the earrings which *were* in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree which *was* by Shechem.

<sup>5</sup> And they journeyed, and the terror of God was upon the cities that *were* all around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob. <sup>6</sup> So Jacob came to Luz (that *is*, Bethel), which *is* in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who *were* with him. <sup>7</sup> And he built an altar there and called the place El Bethel, because there God appeared to him when he fled from the face of his brother.

<sup>8</sup> Now Deborah, Rebekah’s nurse, died, and she was buried below Bethel under the terebinth tree. So the name of it was called Allon Bachuth.

<sup>9</sup> Then God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Padan Aram, and blessed him. <sup>10</sup> And God said to him, “Your name *is* Jacob; your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be your name.” So He called his name Israel. <sup>11</sup> Also God said to him: “I *am* God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body. <sup>12</sup> The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your descendants after you I give this land.” <sup>13</sup> Then God went up from him in the place where He talked with him. <sup>14</sup> So Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He talked with him, a pillar of stone; and he poured a drink offering on it, and he poured oil on it. <sup>15</sup> And Jacob called the name of the place where God spoke with him, Bethel.

<sup>16</sup> Then they journeyed from Bethel. And when there was but a little distance to go to Ephrath, Rachel labored *in childbirth*, and she had hard labor. <sup>17</sup> Now it came to pass, when she was in hard labor, that the midwife said to her, “Do not fear; you will have this son also.” <sup>18</sup> And so it was, as her soul was departing (for she died), that she called his name Ben-Oni; but his father called him Benjamin. <sup>19</sup> So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that *is*, Bethlehem). <sup>20</sup> And Jacob set a pillar on her grave, which *is* the pillar of Rachel’s grave to this day.

<sup>21</sup> Then Israel journeyed and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder. <sup>22</sup> And it happened, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine; and Israel heard *about it*.

Now the sons of Jacob were twelve: <sup>23</sup> the sons of Leah *were* Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, and Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun; <sup>24</sup> the sons of Rachel *were* Joseph and Benjamin; <sup>25</sup> the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maidservant, *were* Dan and Naphtali; <sup>26</sup> and the sons of Zilpah, Leah's maidservant, *were* Gad and Asher. These *were* the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Padan Aram.

<sup>27</sup> Then Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre, or Kirjath Arba (that *is*, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had dwelt. <sup>28</sup> Now the days of Isaac were one hundred and eighty years. <sup>29</sup> So Isaac breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people, *being* old and full of days. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

**Confession:** I know that my God is a giver, for He has given so much to me.  
I see how my God is working through my losses as I move toward a certain future.  
Lead on, Jesus – for You know what is best for me. I'll go wherever You lead!

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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## JULY 30 – August 5 – A Certain Man In Uncertain Times

**“Joseph saw the sheaves and stars bowing to him, but there were things he did not see. He never saw himself staggering in Shechem. He did not see himself in a pit in Dothan. He could not envision being sold to a traveling band of Ishmaelites or stuck in a prison in Egypt.” – Ken Gurley**

**Overview:** It all started with favoritism and a coat, and the dreams just added to the resentment Joseph’s brothers felt toward him. There is vigorous debate for killing him, but in the end he is sold into slavery. His father jumps to conclusions and assumes he is dead.

**Memory verse:** 5 - *Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more.*

### Genesis 37

Now Jacob dwelt in the land where his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan.

<sup>2</sup> This *is* the history of Jacob. Joseph, *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; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to his father.

<sup>3</sup> Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he *was* the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of *many* colors. <sup>4</sup> But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.

<sup>5</sup> Now Joseph had a dream, and he told *it* to his brothers; and they hated him even more. <sup>6</sup> So he said to them, “Please hear this dream which I have dreamed: <sup>7</sup> There we were, binding sheaves 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.”

<sup>8</sup> And his brothers said to him, “Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?” So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

<sup>9</sup> 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.”

<sup>10</sup> 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?” <sup>11</sup> And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter *in mind*.

<sup>12</sup> Then his brothers went to feed their father’s flock in Shechem. <sup>13</sup> And Israel said to Joseph, “Are not your brothers feeding *the flock* in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them.”

So he said to him, “Here I am.”

<sup>14</sup> 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.

<sup>15</sup> Now a certain man found him, and there he was, wandering in the field. And the man asked him, saying, “What are you seeking?”

<sup>16</sup> So he said, “I am seeking my brothers. Please tell me where they are feeding *their flocks*.”

<sup>17</sup> And the man said, “They have departed from here, for I heard them say, ‘Let us go to Dothan.’” So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan.

<sup>18</sup> Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him. <sup>19</sup> Then they said to one another, “Look, this dreamer is coming! <sup>20</sup> 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!”

<sup>21</sup> But Reuben heard *it*, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, “Let us not kill him.” <sup>22</sup> 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.

<sup>23</sup> 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. <sup>24</sup> Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit *was* empty; *there was* no water in it.

<sup>25</sup> And they sat down to eat a meal. Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry *them* down to Egypt. <sup>26</sup> So Judah said to his brothers, “What profit *is there* if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? <sup>27</sup> 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. <sup>28</sup> 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. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

<sup>29</sup> Then Reuben returned to the pit, and indeed Joseph *was* not in the pit; and he tore his clothes. <sup>30</sup> And he returned to his brothers and said, “The lad *is* no *more*; and I, where shall I go?” <sup>31</sup> So they took Joseph’s tunic, killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the blood. <sup>32</sup> 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?”

<sup>33</sup> 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.” <sup>34</sup> Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist, and mourned for his son many days. <sup>35</sup> 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. <sup>36</sup> Now the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh *and* captain of the guard.

**Confession:** Thank You for the dreams God; thank You for the dreams that are yet to be fulfilled. I recognize that dreams come with price tags, and I will not be discouraged when I encounter the parts of Your plan that I did not expect.

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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## August 6-12 – Storms Must Come

**“Exits and entrances are life’s toughest things” – Solomon -1 Kings 3:7**

**Overview:** *Overconfident ... overwhelmed ... overjoyed.* In a time of prosperity, David had become overconfident. When illness came, he was overwhelmed. Then came the healing, and his mourning turned to joy.

**Memory verse:** *5 - For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.*

### Psalm 30

- 1 I will extol You, O LORD, for You have lifted me up,  
And have not let my foes rejoice over me.
- 2 O LORD my God, I cried out to You, and You healed me.
- 3 O LORD, You brought my soul up from the grave;  
You have kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.
- 4 Sing praise to the LORD, you saints of His,  
And give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name.
- 5 For His anger *is but for a moment*, His favor *is for life*;  
Weeping may endure for a night, but joy *comes* in the morning.
- 6 Now in my prosperity I said, “I shall never be moved.”
- 7 LORD, by Your favor You have made my mountain stand strong;  
You hid Your face, *and* I was troubled.
- 8 I cried out to You, O LORD; and to the LORD I made supplication:
- 9 “What profit *is there* in my blood, when I go down to the pit?  
Will the dust praise You? Will it declare Your truth?”
- 10 Hear, O LORD, and have mercy on me; LORD, be my helper!”
- 11 You have turned for me my mourning into dancing;  
You have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness,
- 12 To the end that *my* glory may sing praise to You and not be silent.  
O LORD my God, I will give thanks to You forever.

**Confession:** I am letting go of every single dream; I lay each one down at your feet  
Every moment of my wandering, never changes what you see  
I try to win this war, I confess, my hands are weary, I need your rest  
Mighty warrior, king of the fight No matter what I face you're by my side

When you don't move the mountains I'm needing you to move  
When you don't part the waters I wish I could walk through  
When you don't give the answers As I cry out to you I will trust in you



**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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## August 13-19 – Everyone Has A Dothan

**“It is easier to forgive an enemy than to forgive a friend” – William Blake**

**Overview:** It’s a tale of two dreams. Two of Joseph’s fellow prisoners, servants to the king, had strange dreams, and Joseph correctly interpreted both. Jealousy and betrayal...

**Memory verse:** 23 - *Yet the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.*

### Genesis 40

It came to pass after these things *that* the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt offended their lord, the king of Egypt. <sup>2</sup> And Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief butler and the chief baker. <sup>3</sup> So he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison, the place where Joseph *was* confined. <sup>4</sup> And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them; so they were in custody for a while.

<sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> And Joseph came in to them in the morning and looked at them, and saw that they *were* sad. <sup>7</sup> 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 today?”

<sup>8</sup> And they said to him, “We each have had a dream, and *there is* no interpreter of it.”

So Joseph said to them, “Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell *them* to me, please.”

<sup>9</sup> Then the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, “Behold, in my dream a vine *was* before me, <sup>10</sup> and in the vine *were* three branches; it *was* as though it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and its clusters brought forth ripe grapes. <sup>11</sup> 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.”

<sup>12</sup> And Joseph said to him, “This *is* the interpretation of it: The three branches *are* three days. <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> For indeed I was stolen away from the land of the Hebrews; and also I have done nothing here that they should put me into the dungeon.”

<sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> In the uppermost basket *were* all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, and the birds ate them out of the basket on my head.”

<sup>18</sup> So Joseph answered and said, “This *is* the interpretation of it: The three baskets *are* three days. <sup>19</sup> 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.”

<sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> Then he restored the chief butler to his butlership again, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh’s hand. <sup>22</sup> But he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them. <sup>23</sup> Yet the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

**Confession:** Jesus, forgive me for every time I have doubted You. My God has never forsaken me. In my times of struggle, I will doubt my fear and feed my faith!

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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## August 20-26 – The Place of Two Wells

***“People change when they hurt enough that they have to, learn enough that they want to, or receive enough that they are able to” – John Maxwell***

**Overview:** When the grain ran out, Jacob sent all of his sons but Benjamin to go and buy some. Joseph recognized them, but they did not recognize him. He imprisoned them and then allowed them to go home when they left Simeon and promised to bring Benjamin back with them. Jacob refused to let Benjamin go to Egypt, and the famine continued.

**Memory verse:** 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.”*

## Genesis 42

When Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, “Why do you look at one another?” <sup>2</sup> And he said, “Indeed I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down to that place and buy for us there, that we may live and not die.”

<sup>3</sup> So Joseph’s ten brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt. <sup>4</sup> But Jacob did not send Joseph’s brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he said, “Lest some calamity befall him.”

<sup>5</sup> And the sons of Israel went to buy *grain* among those who journeyed, for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

<sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he acted as a stranger to them and spoke roughly to them. Then he said to them, “Where do you come from?”

And they said, “From the land of Canaan to buy food.”

<sup>8</sup> So Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. <sup>9</sup> Then Joseph remembered the dreams which he had dreamed about them, and said to them, “You *are* spies! You have come to see the nakedness of the land!”

<sup>10</sup> And they said to him, “No, my lord, but your servants have come to buy food. <sup>11</sup> We are all one man’s sons; we *are* honest *men*; your servants are not spies.”

<sup>12</sup> But he said to them, “No, but you have come to see the nakedness of the land.”

<sup>13</sup> 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.”

<sup>14</sup> But Joseph said to them, “It *is* as I spoke to you, saying, ‘You *are* spies!’ <sup>15</sup> In this *manner* you shall be tested: By the life of Pharaoh, you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here. <sup>16</sup> 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!” <sup>17</sup> So he put them all together in prison three days.

<sup>18</sup> Then Joseph said to them the third day, “Do this and live, *for* I fear God: <sup>19</sup> If you *are* honest *men*, let one of your brothers be confined to your prison house; but you, go and carry grain for the famine of your houses. <sup>20</sup> And bring your youngest brother to me; so your words will be verified, and you shall not die.”

And they did so. <sup>21</sup> Then they said to one another, “We *are* truly guilty concerning our brother, for we saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us, and we would not hear; therefore this distress has come upon us.”

<sup>22</sup> 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.” <sup>23</sup> But they did not know that Joseph understood *them*, for he spoke to them through an interpreter. <sup>24</sup> And he turned himself away from them and wept. Then he returned to them again, and talked with them. And he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes.

<sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> So they loaded their donkeys with the grain and departed from there. <sup>27</sup> But as one *of them* opened his sack to give his donkey feed at the encampment, he saw his money; and there it was, in the mouth of his sack. <sup>28</sup> So he said to his brothers, “My money has been restored, and there it is, in my sack!” Then their hearts failed *them* and they were afraid, saying to one another, “What *is* this *that* God has done to us?”

<sup>29</sup> Then they went to Jacob their father in the land of Canaan and told him all that had happened to them, saying: <sup>30</sup> “The man *who is* lord of the land spoke roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country. <sup>31</sup> But we said to him, ‘We *are* honest *men*; we are not spies. <sup>32</sup> 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.’ <sup>33</sup> 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. <sup>34</sup> 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.’ ”

<sup>35</sup> 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. <sup>36</sup> 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.”

<sup>37</sup> 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.”

<sup>38</sup> But he said, “My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is left alone. 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.”

**Confession:** I accept that I must reap what I have sown, but I also rejoice knowing a new season is on the horizon. I will begin again. I refuse to let my past rob me of my future.

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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## August 27-September 2 – From Demonic Detours to Divine Destiny

***“The most outrageous lies that can be invented will find believers, if a man only tells them with all his might.” – Mark Twain***

**Overview:** This chapter uncovers the fourth low point in Joseph’s life. It is perhaps the most familiar to us – the false accusations raised against him by Potiphar’s wife. Its familiarity, however, sometimes causes us to lose sight of its relevance to our daily lives. Not all will lose a parent as a child or will be threatened with murder by jealous brothers, but ALL OF US will at some point in our lives be unjustly accused.

**Memory verse:** *21 - But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.*

### Genesis 39

Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there. <sup>2</sup> The LORD was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. <sup>3</sup> And his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD made all he did to prosper in his hand. <sup>4</sup> So Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all *that* he had he put under his authority. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> Thus he left all that he had in Joseph’s hand, and he did not know what he had except for the bread which he ate.

Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance.

<sup>7</sup> And it came to pass after these things that his master’s wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, “Lie with me.”

<sup>8</sup> But he refused and said 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. <sup>9</sup> 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 against God?”

<sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> 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, <sup>12</sup> that she caught him by his garment, saying, “Lie with me.” But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside. <sup>13</sup> And so it was, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and fled outside, <sup>14</sup> 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. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice. <sup>15</sup> And it happened, when he heard that I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me, and fled and went outside.”

<sup>16</sup> So she kept his garment with her until his master came home. <sup>17</sup> 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; <sup>18</sup> so it happened, as I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me and fled outside.”

<sup>19</sup> 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 was aroused. <sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. <sup>22</sup> And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph’s hand all the prisoners who *were* in the prison; whatever they did there, it was his doing. <sup>23</sup> 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.

**Confession:** I know that God can be trusted. I have faith that He is working for my good, even when I don’t see anything positive in my circumstance. When I am falsely accused I get to understand what You went through. Like Joseph, I know that my God is fashioning me to be of lasting value to His eternal Kingdom.

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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## September 3-9 – The Crucible of Affliction

***“Fame is a vapor, popularity an accident, riches take wing,  
and only character endures.” – Horace Greeley***

**Overview:** We have studied chapters covering Joseph’s life before and after this one. Here we get some of the back story that led to his journey to the palace. When Pharaoh had dreams that no one could interpret, his butler remembered Joseph. Joseph interpreted the dreams and then Pharaoh put him in charge over all the land of Egypt. It all came to pass just as Joseph said, and before the seven years of famine, Joseph had two sons. Their names have as much significance as the new one given to Joseph which means – “God still speaks; God still lives.”

**Memory verse:** 38 - *And Pharaoh said to his servants,  
“Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God?”*

## Genesis 41

Then it came to pass, at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh had a dream; and behold, he stood by the river. <sup>2</sup> Suddenly there came up out of the river seven cows, fine looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> And the ugly and gaunt cows ate up the seven fine looking and fat cows. So Pharaoh awoke. <sup>5</sup> He slept and dreamed a second time; and suddenly seven heads of grain came up on one stalk, plump and good. <sup>6</sup> Then behold, seven thin heads, blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them. <sup>7</sup> And the seven thin heads devoured the seven plump and full heads. So Pharaoh awoke, and indeed, it was a dream. <sup>8</sup> Now it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled, and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men. And Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was no one who could interpret them for Pharaoh.

<sup>9</sup> Then the chief butler spoke to Pharaoh, saying: “I remember my faults this day. <sup>10</sup> 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, <sup>11</sup> we each had a dream in one night, he and I. Each of us dreamed according to the interpretation of his own dream. <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> And it came to pass, just as he interpreted for us, so it happened. He restored me to my office, and he hanged him.”

<sup>14</sup> Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him quickly out of the dungeon; and he shaved, changed his clothing, and came to Pharaoh. <sup>15</sup> 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.”

<sup>16</sup> So Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, “It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace.”

<sup>17</sup> Then Pharaoh said to Joseph: “Behold, in my dream I stood on the bank of the river. <sup>18</sup> Suddenly seven cows came up out of the river, fine looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow. <sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> And the gaunt and ugly



cows ate up the first seven, the fat cows. <sup>21</sup> 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. <sup>22</sup> Also I saw in my dream, and suddenly seven heads came up on one stalk, full and good. <sup>23</sup> Then behold, seven heads, withered, thin, and blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them. <sup>24</sup> 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.”

<sup>25</sup> Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, “The dreams of Pharaoh are one; God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do: <sup>26</sup> The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good heads are seven years; the dreams are one. <sup>27</sup> 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. <sup>28</sup> This is the thing which I have spoken to Pharaoh. God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do. <sup>29</sup> Indeed seven years of great plenty will come throughout all the land of Egypt; <sup>30</sup> 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. <sup>31</sup> So the plenty will not be known in the land because of the famine following, for it will be very severe. <sup>32</sup> And the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.

<sup>33</sup> “Now therefore, let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt. <sup>34</sup> 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. <sup>35</sup> 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. <sup>36</sup> Then that food shall be as a reserve 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.”

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

<sup>39</sup> Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, there is no one as discerning and wise as you. <sup>40</sup> 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.” <sup>41</sup> And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.”

<sup>42</sup> Then Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph’s hand; and he clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. <sup>43</sup> 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. <sup>44</sup> 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.” <sup>45</sup> And Pharaoh called Joseph’s name Zaphnath-Paaneah. And he gave him as a wife Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On. So Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt.

<sup>46</sup> Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt. <sup>47</sup> Now in the seven plentiful years the ground brought forth abundantly. <sup>48</sup> 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. <sup>49</sup> Joseph gathered very much grain, as the sand of the sea, until he stopped counting, for it was immeasurable.

<sup>50</sup> 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. <sup>51</sup> Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: “For God has made me forget all my toil and all my father’s house.”

<sup>52</sup> And the name of the second he called Ephraim: "For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction."

<sup>53</sup> Then the seven years of plenty which were in the land of Egypt ended, <sup>54</sup> 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. <sup>55</sup> 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." <sup>56</sup> 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. <sup>57</sup> So all countries came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain, because the famine was severe in all lands.

**Confession:** I know that my God will never forget me. In every situation I will call on the Name of the Lord with confidence that I am in hearing distance. Every day that it seems I am not heard or seen, I will remind myself of how God remembered Joseph. I give praise to my Savior for keeping watch over me and guiding my steps. In His time I will arise.

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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## September 10-16 – The Beginning of the Unveiling

**“The Bible, as a revelation from God, was not designed to give us all the information we might desire, nor to solve all the questions about which the human soul is perplexed, but to impart enough to be a safe guide to the haven of eternal rest.” – Albert Barnes**

**Overview:** Near the end of his life, John received a vision from Christ which he recorded for the benefit of the seven churches in Asia and for Christians throughout history. He begins this chapter declaring the reason and design of his writing. This is the only book in the Bible that promises a blessing to those who listen to its words and do what it says. We get an incredible and glorious description of Jesus when the revelation is delivered.

**Memory verse:** *8 - I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.*

## Revelation 1

THE Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified *it* by his angel unto his servant John: <sup>2</sup>Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. <sup>3</sup>Blessed *is* he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time *is* at hand.

<sup>4</sup>John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; <sup>5</sup>And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, <sup>6</sup>And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

<sup>7</sup>Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they *also* which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. <sup>8</sup>I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

<sup>9</sup>I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. <sup>10</sup>I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, <sup>11</sup>Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send *it* unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. <sup>12</sup>And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; <sup>13</sup>And in the midst of the seven candlesticks *one* like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. <sup>14</sup>His head and *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes *were* as a flame of fire; <sup>15</sup>And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. <sup>16</sup>And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance *was* as the sun shineth in his strength. <sup>17</sup>And when I saw him, I fell at his

feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: <sup>18</sup> *I am* he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. <sup>19</sup> Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; <sup>20</sup> The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

**Confession:** I seek to know my Lord and to see Him in all His fulness. I will live expecting His return at any day. I will not fear, for He has touched me. I long for the day when I will see Him face to face. Until then, I will daily fall before His greatness in humble adoration.

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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## September 17-23 – Seventy Times Seven

**“True forgiveness is not an action after the fact,  
it is an attitude with which you enter each moment.” – David Ridge**

**Overview:** The greatness of humility and the unique characteristics of children is highlighted. Jesus goes on to warn against offense as He shares about the value of what could be overlooked or seen as insignificant. Here we also find the pattern for church discipline. The chapter concludes with a parable about forgiveness where a forgiven servant is unwilling to forgive.

**Memory verse:** 20 - *For where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there in the midst of them.*

### Matthew 18

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”<sup>2</sup> Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them,<sup>3</sup> and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.<sup>4</sup> Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.<sup>5</sup> Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.

<sup>6</sup> “Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.<sup>7</sup> Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!

<sup>8</sup> “If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast *it* from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire.<sup>9</sup> And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast *it* from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire.

<sup>10</sup> “Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven.<sup>11</sup> For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.

<sup>12</sup> “What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying?<sup>13</sup> And if he should find it, assuredly, I say to you, he rejoices more over that *sheep* than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray.<sup>14</sup> Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

<sup>15</sup> “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.<sup>16</sup> But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that *‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’*<sup>17</sup> And if he refuses to hear them, tell *it* to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

<sup>18</sup> “Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

<sup>19</sup>“Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. <sup>20</sup>For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”

<sup>21</sup>Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?”

<sup>22</sup>Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. <sup>23</sup>Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. <sup>24</sup>And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. <sup>25</sup>But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. <sup>26</sup>The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, ‘Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ <sup>27</sup>Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

<sup>28</sup>“But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took *him* by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe!’ <sup>29</sup>So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ <sup>30</sup>And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. <sup>31</sup>So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. <sup>32</sup>Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. <sup>33</sup>Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?’ <sup>34</sup>And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.

<sup>35</sup>“So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.”

**Confession:** I will seek to become as a little child in the way I view myself. I will value the people and things that I could mistakenly consider as insignificant. I will be careful not to offend others, and I will forgive as I have been forgiven.

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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## September 24-30 – The Wisdom of God’s Foolishness

**“By His own heavenly design, God disguises His wisdom, and quite often the disguise is foolishness. God’s wisdom is so wise that it often appears as foolishness to the world.”**

**– Raymond Woodward**

**Overview:** After a brief greeting, Paul began his letter expressing his thanks to God for their many spiritual gifts, and his confidence that God would continue to bless them. But the Corinthians had some problems. Paul dealt first of all with their divisions and quarreling. They had begun following various leaders, apparently based in part on who had baptized them. Recognizing that one of the factions centered on him, Paul didn’t hesitate to single out his own fan club for special rebuke (12–13).

Not only is the gospel simple (17), many consider it “foolish” (18). Reminding the church of their humble origins (26), Paul said God made the gospel simple so that people would focus on and give glory to Christ, not themselves. Paul did not say “not any” wise, powerful, or wealthy people come to faith, but that “not many” such people do (26). Pride was in play here, and thus Paul’s focus on their humble past (26).

**Memory verse:** *25 - Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*

### 1 Corinthians 1

Paul, called *to be* an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes *our* brother,<sup>2</sup> To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

<sup>3</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>4</sup> I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, <sup>5</sup> that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge, <sup>6</sup> even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, <sup>7</sup> so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>8</sup> who will also confirm you to the end, *that you may be* blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> God *is* faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

<sup>10</sup> Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you, but *that* you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. <sup>11</sup> For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe’s *household*, that there are contentions among you. <sup>12</sup> 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.” <sup>13</sup> Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

<sup>14</sup> I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, <sup>15</sup> lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name. <sup>16</sup> Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other. <sup>17</sup> For Christ did not send me to baptize,

but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.

<sup>18</sup> For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. <sup>19</sup> For it is written:

*“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,  
And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.”*

<sup>20</sup> Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? <sup>21</sup> For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup> For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; <sup>23</sup> but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, <sup>24</sup> but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup> Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

<sup>26</sup> For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*. <sup>27</sup> But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; <sup>28</sup> and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, <sup>29</sup> that no flesh should glory in His presence. <sup>30</sup> But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—<sup>31</sup> that, as it is written, *“He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.”*

**Confession:** I will honor my faithful God by utilizing the gifts He has given me as I wait for His return. I will rejoice in the power of God that comes to me by the preaching of the cross. I embrace from God what others see as foolishness and weakness. I refuse to be impressed by the mighty things of this world, and I find my glory in the Lord.

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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## October 1-7 – Thank You For Your Commitment

**“The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult; and left untried.” – G.K. Chesteron**

**Overview:** Paul thanked God for the Christians at Thessalonica who, despite great suffering, had become examples to believers throughout Greece, both in personal conduct and in evangelistic zeal. Verses 9–10 expands Paul’s description given in verse 3:

- Their “faithful work” involved turning from idolatry to the one true God.
- Their “loving deeds” involved serving the one true God.
- Their “continual anticipation” involved their expectant waiting for Christ’s return.

God’s Word is effective no matter how ineffective or unworthy the messenger (see Isaiah 55:11; Philippians 1:15–18), but how much better when the spokespersons and the Scriptures are in perfect harmony, so that the Word goes forth “with power,” with the authority of the Holy Ghost (5).

**Memory verse:** *5 - For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.*

## 1 Thessalonians 1

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>2</sup>We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, <sup>3</sup>remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, <sup>4</sup>knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God. <sup>5</sup>For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

<sup>6</sup>And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit, <sup>7</sup>so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. <sup>8</sup>For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. <sup>9</sup>For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, <sup>10</sup>and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *even* Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

**Confession:** I always have something for which to be thankful. As Paul prayed for the members of this church, I will pray for those in my church. I give thanks to God for them as I remember their works of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope.

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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## October 8-14 – Welcoming The Word

**“We can’t stop our critics, but we can make sure what they say won’t stick to us.”**  
– **Ray Pritchard**

**Overview:** Paul reminded the Thessalonians that he had been sincere and straightforward with them, and had sought to be a blessing and not a burden in any way.

He again commends his readers for their ready response to the gospel, especially considering how much the unbelieving Jews had opposed both Paul and them.

He then reminded them of how consistently the Jews had opposed Christ and the gospel:

- They had “killed their own prophets, and ... the Lord Jesus” (2:15; see Acts 2:22–23; 5:30; 7:52).
- They had “persecuted us” (2:15).
- They “opposed everyone,” trying to hinder Paul’s Gentile outreach (2:15–16; see Acts 13:50; 14:19; 17:5; 18:12).

Such strong language has led some to call Paul anti-Semitic. Yet Paul was proud of his own Jewish heritage (see Acts 22:3; Phil. 3:4–5), and his great heart practically bled for the conversion of his beloved nation (see Rom. 9:1–3; 10:1).

Paul had tried several times to revisit the Thessalonians but was always hindered by Satan. His absence from them only increased his desire to see them, his glory and joy.

**Memory verse:** *13 - For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.*

## 1 Thessalonians 2

For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain. <sup>2</sup> But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict. <sup>3</sup> For our exhortation *did* not *come* from error or uncleanness, nor *was it* in deceit.

<sup>4</sup> But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts. <sup>5</sup> For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness—God *is* witness. <sup>6</sup> Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. <sup>7</sup> But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing *mother* cherishes her own children. <sup>8</sup> So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. <sup>9</sup> For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.

<sup>10</sup> You *are* witnesses, and God *also*, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; <sup>11</sup> as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father *does* his own children, <sup>12</sup> that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

<sup>13</sup> For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed *it* not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe. <sup>14</sup> For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they *did* from the Judeans, <sup>15</sup> who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God and are contrary to all men, <sup>16</sup> forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always to fill up *the measure of* their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.

<sup>17</sup> But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored more eagerly to see your face with great desire. <sup>18</sup> Therefore we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but Satan hindered us. <sup>19</sup> For what *is* our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? *Is it* not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? <sup>20</sup> For you are our glory and joy.

**Confession:** I am thankful for those who have invested time and effort in me. I will receive the Word of God as truth. I desire for it to be said of me as it was the Thessalonians – that I am a Christ follower and I appreciate those who have labored for my spiritual well-being. I am proof that grace works, and I have been blessed to be a blessing! God, I ask for Your help to live the truth and not just to speak it.

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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## October 15-21 – How To Pray When Life Blows Up

**“Prayer is not everything, but everything is by prayer.”– Ray Ortlund**

**Overview:** Paul knew the Thessalonians were near the breaking point so he sent Timothy to check on them. When Timothy came back with a good report that the believers were standing firm under pressure, Paul was filled with joy. He was encouraged (7), the news was like a new lease on life to him (8), and he couldn't stop thanking God for them (9). That brings us to Paul's prayer in verses 10-13, which is an excellent way to pray for those going through a hard time. Pray for the following-

### Faith without Holes – verse 10

“Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith”

### Love without Limits – verse 12

“May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you”

### Strength without Flaws – verse 13

“May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones”

**Memory verse:** *4 - For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know.*

## 1 Thessalonians 3

Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone, <sup>2</sup> and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith, <sup>3</sup> that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. <sup>4</sup> For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know. <sup>5</sup> For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain.

<sup>6</sup> But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always have good remembrance of us, greatly desiring to see us, as we also *to see you*—<sup>7</sup> therefore, brethren, in all our affliction and distress we were comforted concerning you by your faith. <sup>8</sup> For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.

<sup>9</sup> For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God, <sup>10</sup> night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith?

<sup>11</sup> Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you. <sup>12</sup> And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all,

just as we *do* to you, <sup>13</sup> so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

**Confession:** With my trust in God, I will not be discouraged by the things that happen around me. I recognize that I am where I am today because somebody prayed for me. I look for ways to encourage others, even as I have been encouraged myself.

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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## October 22-28 – What Happens When We Die

*“It ain't the parts of the Bible that I can't understand that bother me, it is the parts that I do understand.”– Mark Twain*

**Overview:** In the last chapter, Paul referred to elements “lacking” in the Thessalonians’ faith (3:10) and had prayed accordingly (11-13). These deficiencies seemed to have prompted discussions on sexual purity (1-8), brotherly love (9-10), living peaceably with others, working diligently, death, and the return of Christ. From these writings, it seems clear that Paul felt that faith pervaded every aspect of a Christian’s life.

**Memory verse:** *10b, 11 – But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more, that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you,*

### 1 Thessalonians 4

Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; <sup>2</sup> for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

<sup>3</sup> For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; <sup>4</sup> that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, <sup>5</sup> not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; <sup>6</sup> that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord *is* the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. <sup>7</sup> For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. <sup>8</sup> Therefore he who rejects *this* does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.

<sup>9</sup> But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; <sup>10</sup> and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more; <sup>11</sup> that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, <sup>12</sup> that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and *that* you may lack nothing.

<sup>13</sup> But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

<sup>15</sup> For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. <sup>18</sup> Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**Confession:** I declare that my body is the dwelling place of God's Spirit, and I seek to honor Him in all I say and do. I remind myself repeatedly to love others as Christ loved me and gave Himself for me. I live with expectant hope of when I will see those who sleep in Jesus and when I shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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## October 29 – November 4 – The Last Act Is About To Begin

*“I would like people to live in the present with eternity in mind.*

*If there is, in fact, going to be rapture one day, in which we leave everything behind, shouldn't that loosen our grip on our material possessions right now?” – Robert Jeffress*

**Overview:** We learn three things about the coming Day of the Lord at the end of the age. First, it will come suddenly, like a thief in the night. Jesus predicted the same thing in Matthew 24:37-38.

Second, it will be a period of great destruction. This refers to the vast judgments described in the book of Revelation, when the seals are broken, the trumpets sound and the bowls of God's judgment poured out on the earth. All those terrible events will take place during a seven-year period called “the tribulation”

Third, there will be no escape. When the Day of the Lord finally comes and God's fury is poured out on the earth, there will be no place to run, no place to hide. He uses a fascinating analogy of labor and childbirth to make his point. When the time has come, you've got to go because the baby is on the way. You can't ignore those sharp pains and you can't make them go away.

The same is true of the Day of the Lord. When God's judgment is poured out on this earth, no one will escape. The world cannot escape the tribulation period. Your only hope is to find the way of escape through the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Memory verse:** *2 - For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.*

### 1 Thessalonians 5

But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. <sup>2</sup> For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. <sup>3</sup> For when they say, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. <sup>4</sup> But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. <sup>5</sup> You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. <sup>6</sup> Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober. <sup>7</sup> For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. <sup>8</sup> But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. <sup>9</sup> For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>10</sup> who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

<sup>11</sup> Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

<sup>12</sup> And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, <sup>13</sup> and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.

<sup>14</sup> Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. <sup>15</sup> See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.

<sup>16</sup> Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup> pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup> in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

<sup>19</sup> Do not quench the Spirit. <sup>20</sup> Do not despise prophecies. <sup>21</sup> Test all things; hold fast what is good. <sup>22</sup> Abstain from every form of evil.

<sup>23</sup> Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>24</sup> He who calls you *is* faithful, who also will do *it*.

<sup>25</sup> Brethren, pray for us.

<sup>26</sup> Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss.

<sup>27</sup> I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren.

<sup>28</sup> The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.

**Confession:** I live with eternity in mind. I have an urgency in all I do since there is no promise of how much time we have. I make the most of every day because it may be my last day before end comes. I am thankful for the God of Peace who is sanctifying me through His Spirit and His Word. I will be ready when Jesus comes back!

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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## November 5-11 – A Family Legacy

**“A heritage is the spiritual, emotional and social legacy passed from parent to child . . . good or bad.” – J. Otis Ledbetter**

**Overview:** In this chapter we have the second edition of the ten commandments. Moses reminds the people that they were a covenant between God and Israel. The precepts were repeated, with the double delivery of them, both by word and writing. Moses tells them to be obedient to everything that God has commanded of them so they could live, prosper and prolong their days in their inherited land. The first four commandments (5:6-15) express the relationship to Jehovah while the final six (5:16-21) outline how Israel’s relationship with Him is to be expressed to each other. \*God’s judgment for “the iniquity of the fathers” is always coupled with a declaration of His mercy (Exodus 20:5,6; 34:7; Numbers 14:18; Jeremiah 32:18).

**Memory verse:** *9,10 - you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.*

### Deuteronomy 5

And Moses called all Israel, and said to them: “Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your hearing today, that you may learn them and be careful to observe them. <sup>2</sup> The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. <sup>3</sup> The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, those who *are* here today, all of us who *are* alive. <sup>4</sup> The LORD talked with you face to face on the mountain from the midst of the fire. <sup>5</sup> I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the LORD; for you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up the mountain. *He* said:

<sup>6</sup> ‘I *am* the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

<sup>7</sup> ‘You shall have no other gods before Me.

<sup>8</sup> ‘You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness *of anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth; <sup>9</sup> you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth *generations* of those who hate Me, <sup>10</sup> but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

<sup>11</sup> ‘You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold *him* guiltless who takes His name in vain.

<sup>12</sup> ‘Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you.

<sup>13</sup> Six days you shall labor and do all your work, <sup>14</sup> 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 ox, nor your donkey, nor any of your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. <sup>15</sup> And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God

brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

16 'Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may be well with you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

17 'You shall not murder.

18 'You shall not commit adultery.

19 'You shall not steal.

20 'You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

21 'You shall not covet your neighbor's wife; and you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, his male servant, his female servant, his ox, his donkey, or anything that *is* your neighbor's.'

22 "These words the LORD spoke to all your assembly, in the mountain from the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, with a loud voice; and He added no more. And He wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me.

23 "So it was, when you heard the voice from the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, that you came near to me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders. 24 And you said: 'Surely the LORD our God has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice from the midst of the fire. We have seen this day that God speaks with man; yet he *still* lives. 25 Now therefore, why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the LORD our God anymore, then we shall die. 26 For who *is there* of all flesh who has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire, as we *have*, and lived? 27 You go near and hear all that the LORD our God may say, and tell us all that the LORD our God says to you, and we will hear and do *it*.'

28 "Then the LORD heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the LORD said to me: 'I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They are right *in* all that they have spoken. 29 Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever! 30 Go and say to them, "Return to your tents." 31 But as for you, stand here by Me, and I will speak to you all the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments which you shall teach them, that they may observe *them* in the land which I am giving them to possess.'

32 "Therefore you shall be careful to do as the LORD your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. 33 You shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God has commanded you, that you may live and *that it may be* well with you, and *that* you may prolong *your* days in the land which you shall possess.

**Confession:** I will listen to and obey what the Lord is saying to me through His Word. I am thankful that I can know boldly approach His presence, and I will not allow anyone else to hear from God for me. I will conduct my life in such a way that my legacy will be a godly one. I refuse to let my relationship with Jesus drift into a rule keeping arrangement.

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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## November 12-18 – I AM That I AM

**“Don’t lose hope, even Moses started out as a basket case!”**

**Overview:** The years of Moses's life are divided into three forties; the first forty he spent as a prince in Pharaoh's court, the second a shepherd in Midian, the third a king in Jeshurun. He had now finished his second forty when he received his commission to bring Israel out of Egypt. Moses was born to be Israel's deliverer, and yet not a word is said of it to him till he is eighty years of age. After God gets his attention, the questions begin. Moses' first objection has to do with his own identity, but his second refers to God's identity. God's response is one of the most central passages of theology. God reveals Himself through His eternal name as the I AM. The personal name of God, YHWH, is known as the Tetragrammaton. It is formed from the third-person singular of the verb "to be" (He is/was/will be). See Revelation 1:4, 8; 4:8: "Who is and was and is to come." This occurs more than 6800 times in the Old Testament. Many times it is printed as LORD (all capitals) or occasionally as GOD. It is also printed in the KJV as Jehovah or JEHOVAH, which is a manufactured term produced by combining the four letters of the name with the vowels from the Hebrew word for master owner(lord). Other versions often use Yahweh in place of Jehovah. The chapter ends with instructions as to how they were to leave Egypt.

**Memory verse:** *14 - And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.' "*

### Exodus 3

Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. <sup>2</sup> And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. <sup>3</sup> Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn." <sup>4</sup> So when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am."

<sup>5</sup> Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand *is* holy ground." <sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> And the LORD said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who *are* in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. <sup>8</sup> So I have come down to deliver 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 with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites. <sup>9</sup> Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. <sup>10</sup> Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

<sup>11</sup> 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?”

<sup>12</sup> So He 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.”

<sup>13</sup> 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?”

<sup>14</sup> And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” <sup>15</sup> 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.’” <sup>16</sup> 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;” <sup>17</sup> 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.’” <sup>18</sup> Then they will heed your voice; 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, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.’” <sup>19</sup> But I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not even by a mighty hand. <sup>20</sup> So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in its midst; and after that he will let you go. <sup>21</sup> And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be, when you go, that you shall not go empty-handed. <sup>22</sup> 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 the Egyptians.”

**Confession:** I will be sensitive to the presence and voice of God. I will look for the chance to be on holy ground, and to hear from the great I Am. I know who I am, and I know whose I am! I believe in Divine appointments, and that there are people God is putting in my path.

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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## November 19-25— I Will Not Forget

**“Look backward and thank God. Look forward and trust God.  
He closes doors no man can open, and He opens doors no man can shut.”**

**Overview:** Don't forget to praise him! Remember what God has done: He forgives sins, heals diseases, redeems lives, satisfies desires, and renews our youth (103:1–5). He executes justice but also displays great compassion, for he knows our frailties (103:6–18). All things everywhere—his angels and “everything he has created,” including humans—should praise this great God!

### Memory verse:

*8- The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.*

## Psalm 103

Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, *bless* His holy name!

- 2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits:
- 3 Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases,
- 4 Who redeems your life from destruction,  
Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies,
- 5 Who satisfies your mouth with good *things*,  
so *that* your youth is renewed like the eagle's.
- 6 The LORD executes righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed.
- 7 He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel.
- 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.
- 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.
- 13 As a father pities *his* children, so the LORD pities those who fear Him.
- 14 For He knows our frame; He remembers 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,  
and to those who remember His commandments to do them.
- 19 The LORD has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all.
- 20 Bless the LORD, you His angels, who excel in strength, who do His word,  
heeding the voice of His word.



<sup>21</sup> Bless the LORD, all *you* His hosts, *you* ministers of His, who do His pleasure.

<sup>22</sup> Bless the LORD, all His works, in all places of His dominion.

Bless the LORD, O my soul!

**Confession:** I will not forget the bountiful benefits the Lord has bestowed upon me! I declare that I have been blessed! I am grateful for God's forgiveness. I am thankful for His healing touch. With renewed strength from the One who defies understanding, I will bless the Lord!

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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Sunday  Monday  Tuesday  Wednesday  Thursday  Friday  Saturday

## November 26- December 2– Good Men & Women Are Hard to Find

**“Look backward and thank God. Look forward and trust God.  
He closes doors no man can open, and He opens doors no man can shut.”**

**Overview:** Micah bemoaned Israel’s sad moral condition. He found “not one fair-minded person” among them (7:2; compare Isa. 57:1; Ps. 14:3; Rom. 3:10–12). So deep was Israel’s sin that it had disrupted all interpersonal relationships (7:5–6). It was just like the days of the judges (see Judg. 21:25). Amid this turmoil, Micah had complete confidence in God (7:7). Speaking for his nation, Micah accepted full responsibility for the sin that had brought judgment (7:9) and declared that Israel would rise again from the depths of that judgment (7:8). Israel’s enemies would witness this restoration and would no longer be able to taunt them, for they themselves would experience a judgment from which they would not recover (7:10). When Israel is restored, its borders will be greater than ever (7:11–12). This was partially realized in the return from Babylon but will be ultimately fulfilled in the Millennium, when Israel’s borders will stretch from Assyria to “the towns of Egypt” (7:12). In the meantime, however, Israel must be purged of its sin (7:13). Micah asked God to meet the needs of his people and protect them from danger (7:14). In response, God promised to do miracles for his people just as he did when delivering them from Egypt (7:15). Israel’s enemies will be defeated, not because of the greatness of the nation, but because of the greatness of their God (7:16–17). Israel’s God is unique, for he will forgive them of their sins, once and for all. Their sins will not deter him from his plans to regenerate them (7:18–19). He will keep his unconditional covenants with Abraham (see Gen. 12:1–3), David (see 2 Sam. 7), and Jeremiah (see Jer. 31:31–34)

### Memory verse:

*8- Do not rejoice over me, my enemy; when I fall, I will arise;  
when I sit in darkness, the LORD will be a light to me.*

### Micah 7

Woe is me!

- For I am like those who gather summer fruits, like those who glean vintage grapes;  
*There is no cluster to eat of the first-ripe fruit which my soul desires.*
- <sup>2</sup> The faithful *man* has perished from the earth, and *there is* no one upright among men.  
They all lie in wait for blood; every man hunts his brother with a net.
- <sup>3</sup> That they may successfully do evil with both hands—The prince asks *for gifts*,  
The judge *seeks* a bribe, and the great *man* utters his evil desire;  
so they scheme together.
- <sup>4</sup> The best of them *is* like a brier; the most upright *is sharper* than a thorn hedge;  
The day of your watchman and your punishment comes; now shall be their perplexity.
- <sup>5</sup> Do not trust in a friend; do not put your confidence in a companion;  
Guard the doors of your mouth from her who lies in your bosom.
- <sup>6</sup> For son dishonors father, daughter rises against her mother,  
Daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;  
A man’s enemies *are* the men of his own household.

- 7 Therefore I will look to the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation;  
My God will hear me.
- 8 Do not rejoice over me, my enemy; when I fall, I will arise;  
When I sit in darkness, the LORD *will be* a light to me.
- 9 I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against Him,  
Until He pleads my case and executes justice for me.  
He will bring me forth to the light; I will see His righteousness.
- 10 Then *she who is* my enemy will see, and shame will cover her who said to me,  
“Where is the LORD your God?”  
My eyes will see her; now she will be trampled down like mud in the streets.
- 11 *In* the day when your walls are to be built, *in* that day the decree shall go far and wide.
- 12 *In* that day they shall come to you from Assyria and the fortified cities,  
From the fortress to the River, from sea to sea, and mountain *to* mountain.
- 13 Yet the land shall be desolate because of those who dwell in it,  
And for the fruit of their deeds.
- 14 Shepherd Your people with Your staff, the flock of Your heritage,  
Who dwell solitarily *in* a woodland, in the midst of Carmel;  
Let them feed *in* Bashan and Gilead, as in days of old.
- 15 “As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt,  
I will show them wonders.”
- 16 The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might;  
They shall put *their* hand over *their* mouth; their ears shall be deaf.
- 17 They shall lick the dust like a serpent;  
They shall crawl from their holes like snakes of the earth.  
They shall be afraid of the LORD our God, and shall fear because of You.
- 18 Who *is* a God like You, pardoning iniquity  
And passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage?  
He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights *in* mercy.
- 19 He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities.  
  
You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.
- 20 You will give truth to Jacob *and* mercy to Abraham,  
Which You have sworn to our fathers from days of old.

**Confession:** I know that God has pardoned my sin and forgiven my transgressions! I will  
put my trust in Him. My iniquities are under His feet. I'm thankful and rejoice that  
God has hurled my sins into the depths of the sea!

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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**( )Sunday ( )Monday ( )Tuesday ( )Wednesday ( )Thursday ( )Friday ( )Saturday**

## December 3-9– Hope Is Born

**“Hope is not what you expect; it is what you would never dream. It is a wild, improbable tale with a pinch-me-I’m-dreaming ending. Hope is not a granted wish or a favor performed; no, it is far greater than that. It is a zany, unpredictable dependence on a God who loves to surprise us out of our socks and be there in the flesh to see our reaction.” – Max Lucado**

**Overview:** 1:1–4 “This will bring you up to date.”

1:5–25 The angel’s amazing announcement.

1:26–38 A more amazing announcement.

1:39–45 The two expectant mothers meet.

1:46–56 A song of praise from Scripture.

1:57–80 “Read my note: His name is John!”

**Memory verse:** 37 - *For with God nothing will be impossible.*

## Luke 1

Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, <sup>2</sup> just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, <sup>3</sup> 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, <sup>4</sup> that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.

<sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. <sup>7</sup> But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years.

<sup>8</sup> So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, <sup>9</sup> according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. <sup>10</sup> And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense.

<sup>11</sup> Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. <sup>12</sup> And when Zacharias saw *him*, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

<sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. <sup>17</sup> 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.”

<sup>18</sup> 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.”

<sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> 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."

<sup>21</sup> And the people waited for Zacharias, and marveled that he lingered so long in the temple. <sup>22</sup> 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.

<sup>23</sup> So it was, as soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house. <sup>24</sup> Now after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived; and she hid herself five months, saying, <sup>25</sup> "Thus the Lord has dealt with me, in the days when He looked on *me*, to take away my reproach among people."

<sup>26</sup> Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored *one*, the Lord *is* with you; blessed *are* you among women!"

<sup>29</sup> But when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. <sup>30</sup> Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. <sup>32</sup> 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. <sup>33</sup> And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

<sup>34</sup> Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?"

<sup>35</sup> 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. <sup>36</sup> 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. <sup>37</sup> For with God nothing will be impossible."

<sup>38</sup> Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

<sup>39</sup> Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, <sup>40</sup> and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup> 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. <sup>42</sup> Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed *are* you among women, and blessed *is* the fruit of your womb! <sup>43</sup> But *why is* this *granted* to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? <sup>44</sup> For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. <sup>45</sup> Blessed *is* she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord."

<sup>46</sup> And Mary said:

"My soul magnifies the Lord, <sup>47</sup>And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.

<sup>48</sup> For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant;

For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.

<sup>49</sup> For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy *is* His name.

<sup>50</sup> And His mercy *is* on those who fear Him from generation to generation.

<sup>51</sup> 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.

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.

**Confession:** I will pray with the understanding that answered prayer is not dependent on my knowledge. When I don't know, I will trust in Almighty God. I will not fear the promises of God! My prayer is the same as what Mary prayed – "Let it be to me according to your Word".

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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## December 10-16— Thou Shall Call His Name JESUS

**“Infinite and yet an infant. Eternal, and yet born of a woman.  
Supporting a universe, and yet carried in a mother’s arms...” Charles Spurgeon**

**Overview:** A casual reading of the NT may cause a person to wonder why it begins with something as seemingly dull as a family tree. One might conclude that there is little significance to be drawn from this catalog of names and, thus, skip over it to where the action begins. However, the genealogy is indispensable. It lays the foundation for all that follows. Unless it can be shown that Jesus is a legal descendant of David through the royal line, it is impossible to prove that He is the Messiah-King of Israel. Matthew begins his account where he must—with the documentary evidence that Jesus inherited the legal right to the throne of David through His stepfather, Joseph.

This genealogy traces the *legal* descent of Jesus as King of Israel; the genealogy in Luke’s Gospel traces His *lineal* descent as Son of David. Matthew’s genealogy follows the *royal* line from David through his son, Solomon, the next king; Luke’s genealogy follows the *blood* line from David through another son, Nathan. This genealogy concludes with Joseph, of whom Jesus was the *adopted* Son; the genealogy in Luke 3 probably traces the ancestry of Mary, of whom Jesus was the *real* Son.

A millennium earlier, God had made an unconditional agreement with David, promising him a kingdom that would last forever and a perpetually ruling line (Ps. 89:4, 36, 37). That covenant is now fulfilled in Christ: He is legal heir to the throne of David through Joseph and the actual seed of David through Mary. Because He lives forever, His kingdom will last forever and He will reign forever as David’s greater Son. Jesus united in His Person the only two bases for claims to the throne of Israel (the legal and the lineal); since He still lives, there can be no other claimant.

**Memory verse:** 21 - And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.

## Matthew 1

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:

<sup>2</sup> Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers.  
<sup>3</sup> Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram.  
<sup>4</sup> Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon.  
<sup>5</sup> Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, <sup>6</sup> and Jesse begot David the king.

David the king begot Solomon by her *who had been the wife* of Uriah. <sup>7</sup> Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa. <sup>8</sup> Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah. <sup>9</sup> Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. <sup>10</sup> Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, and Amon begot Josiah. <sup>11</sup> Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon.



<sup>12</sup> And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. <sup>13</sup> Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor. <sup>14</sup> Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud. <sup>15</sup> Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob. <sup>16</sup> And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.

<sup>17</sup> So all the generations from Abraham to David *are* fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon *are* fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ *are* fourteen generations.

<sup>18</sup> Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. <sup>20</sup> But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."

<sup>22</sup> So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: <sup>23</sup> "*Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,*" which is translated, "God with us."

<sup>24</sup> Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, <sup>25</sup> and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.

**Confession:** I will keep the miracle of Christmas and the birth of Jesus alive in my life. I trust in God to guide my intentions and desires as I stay close to Him. I know He is in control even when I feel out of control. I will celebrate His coming and the light He brings.

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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## December 17-23— Glory To God In The Highest

**“Many stand in the place of Simeon - waiting on the fulfillment of a promise. Hear what the Spirit is saying - and know that the answer to your prayer is almost in sight. And may we all become like Anna, the prophetess - recognizing Him for who He is - and proclaiming Him to all who seek Him!” – T.F. Tenney**

**Overview:** Because Caesar had decreed that all citizens of his empire should go to their birthplaces to register for taxation, Joseph and Mary had to go to Bethlehem. While they were there, Jesus was born, fulfilling a prophecy about his birthplace (Micah 5:2). An angel announced Christ’s birth to some shepherds. They speedily came to Bethlehem and, having found him, worshiped God and “told everyone” the supernatural message they had heard concerning him.

According to the law (see Leviticus 12:2–8), Mary offered the sacrifice for purification after childbirth. Apparently, the parents of the true “Lamb of God” couldn’t afford a lamb for the sacrifice, and therefore offered two turtledoves. As a firstborn son, Jesus was dedicated to the Lord (see Exodus 13:2, 12, 15).

A prophet named Simeon (25–35) and a prophetess named Anna (36–38) testified to the identity of the infant Christ. Both were elderly, and Anna was a widow. God had told Simeon, who was waiting for “the Messiah to come and rescue Israel,” that he would see the Messiah before he died. Anna told “everyone who had been waiting for the promised King” that their Redeemer had come.

Briefly summarizing Christ’s early boyhood (39–40), Luke related a remarkable incident from his 12th year. On one trip to Jerusalem, Joseph and Mary lost track of where Jesus was. After much searching they were surprised to find him sitting among the teachers in the Temple. His ability to discuss the law with these men pointed to the special nature of this young man. His statement that he was to be doing his heavenly Father’s business pointed to his understanding that he was the Son of God. The young Jesus grew in mental, physical, spiritual, and social maturity. Meanwhile, Mary quietly observed and thought about this son who was obedient to her even while preparing for his special mission in life.

**Memory verse:** *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.”*

### Luke 2

And it came to pass in those days *that* a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup> This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. <sup>3</sup> So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, <sup>5</sup> to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. <sup>6</sup> So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. <sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup> And this *will be* the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."

<sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

<sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest,  
And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

<sup>15</sup> 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." <sup>16</sup> And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. <sup>17</sup> Now when they had seen *Him*, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. <sup>18</sup> And all those who heard *it* marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. <sup>19</sup> But Mary kept all these things and pondered *them* in her heart. <sup>20</sup> Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.

<sup>21</sup> And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called JESUS, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.

<sup>22</sup> Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present *Him* to the Lord <sup>23</sup> (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "*Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the LORD*"), <sup>24</sup> and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "*A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.*"

<sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> 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. <sup>27</sup> 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, <sup>28</sup> he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said:

<sup>29</sup> "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace,  
According to Your word;  
<sup>30</sup> For my eyes have seen Your salvation  
<sup>31</sup> Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,  
<sup>32</sup> A light to *bring* revelation to the Gentiles,  
And the glory of Your people Israel."

<sup>33</sup> And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. <sup>34</sup> 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 <sup>35</sup> (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

<sup>36</sup> 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; <sup>37</sup> and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. <sup>38</sup> And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

<sup>39</sup> So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth. <sup>40</sup> And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

<sup>41</sup> His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. <sup>42</sup> And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. <sup>43</sup> When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know *it*; <sup>44</sup> but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among *their* relatives and acquaintances. <sup>45</sup> So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. <sup>46</sup> Now so it was *that* after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. <sup>47</sup> And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. <sup>48</sup> So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously."

<sup>49</sup> And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" <sup>50</sup> But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them.

<sup>51</sup> Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. <sup>52</sup> And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

**Confession:** I choose to wait on the promises of God regardless of the time involved. I will not trade presents for His presence. I refuse to allow my spirit to be tainted by the hustle and bustle of the season. I will prepare my home and my life to be a place of peace.

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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Sunday  Monday  Tuesday  Wednesday  Thursday  Friday  Saturday

## December 24-30— The Wise Still Seek Him

**“May we not ‘spend’ Christmas, or ‘observe’ Christmas, but rather ‘keep’ it.”  
— Peter Marshall**

**Overview:** As Micah 5:2 had predicted, Jesus was born in Bethlehem. About two years later (compare 2:7, 16), “wise men” led by a star came to see him. When they inquired about the “king of the Jews,” Herod became very concerned. When informed that prophecy indicated the young king had been born in Bethlehem, Herod determined when the event had occurred, directed the wise men to Bethlehem, and pretended to want to know when they found the child so that he could “worship” him.

Guided once more by the star, the wise men found Jesus, offered gifts to him, and, being warned not to inform Herod of the baby’s whereabouts, returned home.

The wise men were probably astronomers. Tradition says there were three of them—probably because of the three gifts. The myrrh, used to embalm, may have signified the ultimate reason for Christ’s birth. The star was probably supernatural, since it apparently disappeared for a while, necessitating their asking directions from Herod.

Warned by an angel that Herod would try to kill Jesus, Joseph fled with Mary and Jesus to Egypt, fulfilling an OT prophecy of Hosea 11:1–7. Jesus would retrace the life of the nation of Israel, which took refuge in Egypt and later returned to possess Canaan.

Realizing the wise men had fled without leading him to the infant king, Herod became enraged and killed all the male children in Bethlehem up to age two, hoping thereby to kill Jesus (compare 2:16 with 2:7). The event reminded Matthew of Jeremiah’s lament for the Israelite exiles in Jeremiah 31:15–25. Herod’s bloody rampage was in keeping with what history reveals of this cruel man who would later order the execution of his wife and three of his sons. For the third time an angel appeared to Joseph, this time telling him that Herod was dead so he and his family could return to Israel. This, says Matthew, fulfilled the OT prophecy that the Messiah would be called a Nazarene. The prophetic reference is unclear, though it may involve the “rod” that would come up from “the stem of Jesse” (Isaiah 11:1, KJV). *Nazarene* may be related to *netzer*, meaning “rod.” This would be in harmony with Matthew’s emphasis on Christ’s Davidic lineage. Or Matthew may have intended a more general reference to Christ’s lowly nature spoken of in Zechariah. 9:9 and John 1:46.

**Memory verse:** *11 - And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.*

## Matthew 2

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup> saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him."

<sup>3</sup> When Herod the king heard *this*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. <sup>4</sup> And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

<sup>5</sup> So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet:

<sup>6</sup> *'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
Are not the least among the rulers of Judah;  
For out of you shall come a Ruler  
Who will shepherd My people Israel.'* "

<sup>7</sup> Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. <sup>8</sup> And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found *Him*, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also."

<sup>9</sup> When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. <sup>11</sup> And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

<sup>12</sup> Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

<sup>13</sup> Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him."

<sup>14</sup> When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, <sup>15</sup> and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "*Out of Egypt I called My Son.*"

<sup>16</sup> Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. <sup>17</sup> Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying:

<sup>18</sup> *"A voice was heard in Ramah,  
Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning,  
Rachel weeping for her children,  
Refusing to be comforted,  
Because they are no more."*

<sup>19</sup> Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, <sup>20</sup> saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land

of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead." <sup>21</sup> Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel.

<sup>22</sup> But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee. <sup>23</sup> And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

**Confession:** I will present myself to God as an act of worship. Lord, though I wish there was more I could do, I give myself to You! I recognize that there is a cost involved in acting on the direction I receive from God, and I am willing to pay it. I am not wise because of what I have, but for who I listen to. I rejoice in the message of the Christmas story, and with the knowledge that I have found Jesus for myself!

**THOUGHTS. . . INSIGHT. . . What is the Lord saying to me?**

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Sunday  Monday  Tuesday  Wednesday  Thursday  Friday  Saturday

## EXAMPLE CHAPTER SUMMARY FORM

### CHAPTER

Luke 15

Read 5 times ⑥ (check when done)

**1. CAPTION (TITLE)** Lost and Found

**2. CONTENTS** This chapter contains three parables.

1. Verses 3 – 7: The lost sheep
2. Verses 8 – 10: The lost coin
3. Verses 11 – 32: The lost son

### 3. CHIEF PEOPLE

The shepherd with the lost sheep  
The woman with the lost coin  
The father with the lost son

### 4. CHOICE VERSE

Luke 15:7 — “I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.”

### 5. CRUCIAL WORD(S)

Lost (vv. 4, 8 – 9, 24, 32)  
Found (5 – 6, 9, 24, 32)

### 6. CHALLENGES (Difficulties I need to study)

What does verse 7 mean — “ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent”?



## CHAPTER SUMMARY FORM

### 7. CROSS-REFERENCES Luke 15:4 – 6

Matthew 18:11 – 14

Isaiah 53:6

John 10:10 – 14

Psalm 119:176

1 Peter 2:25

### 8. CHRIST SEEN

1st parable — Jesus the Good Shepherd searching for lost sheep.

2nd parable — the Holy Spirit our rightful Owner finding and restoring.

3rd parable — God the Father waiting to welcome us home.

### 9. CENTRAL LESSON(S)

#### Insights

The son went away saying, “Give me” (v. 12). He returned saying, “Make me”  
God cares for sinners and eagerly waits for them to return home.

#### Characteristics of the immature brother

Anger — v. 28

Childishness — v. 28

Jealousy — vv. 29 – 30

Wrong perspective — vv. 29 – 30

Grumbling — vv. 29 – 30

### 10. CONCLUSION (Personal application)

In each of the three parables a concrete effort was made to recover what was lost.

Many of my friends are lost without Christ. I need to develop specific witnessing plans for sharing the Gospel. I will start by sharing my faith with \_\_\_\_\_ this weekend.

I need to express more joy when I hear of people who have begun moving closer to God.

# CHAPTER SUMMARY FORM

Read 5 times ☺ (check when done)

**CHAPTER**

**1. CAPTION (TITLE)**

**2. CONTENTS**

**3. CHIEF PEOPLE**

**4. CHOICE VERSE**

**5. CRUCIAL WORD(S)**

**6. CHALLENGES (Difficulties I need to study)**

# CHAPTER SUMMARY FORM

## 7. CROSS-REFERENCES

## 8. CHRIST SEEN

## 9. CENTRAL LESSON(S)

## 10. CONCLUSION (Personal application)

## PRAYER STARTER

*"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day,  
he went out and departed into a solitary place and there prayed" (Mark 1:35)*

### **Begin with Praise:**

*"Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful  
unto him, and bless his name." (Psalm 100:4)*

*"But thou art holy, O thou that inhabits the praises of Israel (your people)" (Ps. 22:3)*

**Pray for yourself:** Ask God to give you faith, patience, forgiveness, good health, His providence and guidance, daily strength, spiritual blessing and encouragement, renewing of a right spirit, refilling of the Holy Ghost.

**Pray for your family:** Ask Him for the same thing to be done in their lives that you asked for yourself.

**Pray for our church:** Again, ask Him for the same things to be done in the lives of your brothers and sisters that you asked for yourself and family. Pray for your pastor, the leadership team, the faithfulness of our people, for revival and a vast harvest of souls and for many visitors to our church.

**Pray for the unsaved:** Starting with your own family, co-workers, friends, schoolmates, neighbors, city, state, nation, and world – pray for people's hearts to be softened and their minds to be open to God's will for their lives.

**Pray for the corporate church:** Petition heaven for God's blessing on His church, its leaders and its work in the world, including the United Pentecostal Church.

**Pray for world revival:** Pray for miraculous revival in every land, including this land and every foreign land. Ask God's help for our Global and North American

Missionaries. Pray for the churches under their care. Ask the Lord for the same blessing on His churches around the world that we want in our church.

**Pray for the miraculous to happen in our services:** Ask God to grant repentance to sinners, backsliders, and the lukewarm. Ask for many baptisms in Jesus name and for many infillings of the Holy Ghost. Ask for powerful church services, inspirational worship services, life changing preaching. Ask Him to set this church apart from every non-Apostolic church with His favor and miraculous touch. Ask Him for the fulfillment of Isaiah 60 - where multitudes of people: religious and otherwise, flow into the light of His truth.

**Pray for our church ministries:** Ladies Ministry, Men's Ministry, Music Ministry, Children's Ministry, Nursery, Youth, Ushers and Greeters. Pray for the family relationships in the church - husbands and wives, parents and children. Pray for all of the relationships in the church - because His anointing can only flow through the unity of His people.

**Pray for our nation:** Pray for our President and his family. Ask the Lord to give him godly wisdom and direction. Pray for his advisors, cabinet, and others who influence his daily decisions - for godly wisdom and right thinking. Pray for other government leaders - congress, the Supreme Court, our state and local leaders - again for godly wisdom and right thinking. Ask God to turn our nation back towards righteousness!

*"My deepest desire, Lord, is that I might know you in the power of the resurrection and the fellowship of your suffering, being made conformable unto your death. (Phil 3: 10) Lord, I make myself available to you. I present my body as a living sacrifice to you. (Rom 12:1) "This is the day that the Lord has made; I will rejoice and be glad in it." (Ps 118:24)*